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THE NATIONAL DEBT NO NATIONAL GRIEVANCE;

OR

The REAL State of the NATION,

With respect to its civil and religious LIBERTY, COMMERCE, PUBLIC-CREDIT, and FINANCES.

Interspersed with,

Critical Remarks on a pamphlet lately published, Intitled,

The present State of the NATION;

To which are added,

Proposals for improving the Public Revenue, and for providing a Fund for the Exigencies of War, without laying additional Taxes on the Public.

Addressed to the PEOPLE of ENGLAND.

BY A FINANCIER.

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M. DCC. LXVIII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following ſheets would have been been preſented to the public ſoon after the appearance of *The preſent ſtate of the nation*, if the author of them had not ſtopt the preſs; on ſeeing repeated advertiſements, promiſing a ſpeedy publication of *Obſervations on the preſent ſtate of the nation*.—Conſcious of his own inability, and at the ſame time of the neceſſity of giving the nation ſuch a true and impartial account of public affairs as might ſerve to remove the groundleſs fears and apprehenſions raiſed in the minds of men, and eſpecially of the ſtockholders, by that celebrated pamphlet —he would have reſigned the pleaſing taſk with alacrity to an abler pen; but a conſiderable time having elapſed ſince thoſe advertſements were firſt inſerted, and no obſervations having yet appeared, he thought it his duty to proceed in his deſign; and he hopes it will be found that he has given the real ſtate of the nation, and has thrown ſuch a new and ſatisfactory light on the ſyſtem of public credit, as will for the future prevent the bad effects of theſe falſe alarms which ill-deſigning men are continually ſpreading with reſpect to the funds. —He alſo moſt earneſtly wiſhes, that the definition he has given of civil liberty, and of the nature and end of government, may be the means of conciliating our unhappy diviſions, and of encouraging public viratue, frugality, ſimplicity

ſimplicity of manners, and union among the people, with a warm attachment to our excellent conſtitution, due obedience to government, and the moſt zealous loyalty to the king.

If the ſcene ſhall appear to be full of intereſting buſineſs, he hopes kind indulgence will be ſhewn for ſmall inaccuracies in point of method or order; as to typographical errors, he leaves the diſcerning reader to correct them; and becauſe he regards marginal notes and references as knots and uneven threads in the web of literature, which hurt the eye and interrupt the regular courſe of reading — he begs leave to acknowledge once for all, that he has interwoven with his own, the ſentiments of the greateſt writers of the preſent age, and of the laſt, on government, trade, public credit, and the finances. — Having paid this debt, he leaves the whole with the candid and judicious, whoſe patronage he ſollicits, and whoſe cenſure he hopes to avoid, for it will be to him like an untimely froſt, it will deſtroy the tender bud of expectation, and lay an eternal arreſt on his pen.

BRITISH MUSEUM

FELLOW CITIZENS AND COUNTRYMEN!

YOU live in a time when it is become extremely difficult to diſtinguiſh the voice of true Patriotiſm, from the idle clamours of factious diſcontent. — On the one hand, the fawning adulations of ſtipendiary courtiers, placemen, and mercenary ſcribblers, extolling to the ſkies even the blunders and obvious miſconduct of their favorites in adminiſtration, — and on the other, the cavils and objections to every ſalutary meaſure of Government, propagated by the intriguing ſons of oppoſition, equally perplex and bewilder your political judgement; and alternately elate you with viſionary hopes, or alarm and depreſs you with chimerical and abſurd fears.

THOSE who ſecretly combine to clog the wheels of Government, in order to render adminiſtration difficult and painful; and whoſe ſole view is to overturn the miniſtry of the day, awaken all your fears for your dear country. They repreſent her as on the brink of deſtruction — they range themſelves and you under the ſpecious banners of LIBERTY and PATRIOTISM — they endeavour to perſuade you that the free conſtitution of this country, the ſubject of univerſal admiration throughout all Europe, is degenerating into deſpotiſm — that your darling privileges are not only attacked but openly violated — that the public welfare is neglected — that the people in power, have neither good heads nor ſound hearts — that the nation is oppreſſed by the weight of its public debts and taxes — and finally, that we are in great danger from this melancholy ſituation of public affairs, either of becoming a province of France, or of ſuſtaining a public bankruptcy: —ſuch I think has been the ſubſtance of the terrors circulated through the land, by means of thoſe hackney vehicles of intelligence, the public news-papers, ever ſince the late peace, which you juſtly expected was

to ſecure you from all theſe portentous horrors; — yet perhaps there never was a time when Britons, if they knew their own happineſs, might more ſecurely enjoy it; — but, unfortunately, this nation is as much over-run with ſcribblers as Ægypt was formerly with flies and locuſts; and, "of all the engines of diſcontent," ſays a celebrated writer, "there has been none more "powerful among the people than the fixing "names of contumely and reproach on each "other, and the forming cruel and odious diſ-"tinctions between his majeſty's liege ſubjects: "— theſe popular errors are to be lamented, "though not ſo eaſily cured, being ſuitable "enough to the corrupted nature of mankind, "but it is hard that men will not only invent "ill names; but will alſo wreſt and miſinterpret "good ones: — ſo fearful ſome are of a *recon-*"*ciling ſound*, that they raiſe another noiſe to "keep it from being heard, leſt it ſhould ſet "up and encourage a *dangerous ſort of men* who "prefer *peace* and *agreement*, before *violence* and "*confuſion*".

How ſhamefully all our political writings on the ſide of oppoſition, ſince the peace, have tend-

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ed to ſtifle the reconciling ſound of union and harmony; by the brawling voice of licentious faction; and how daringly the artiſt's pencil and the poet's pen have been proſtituted to keep alive hateful diſtinctions, all muſt bear witneſs, who are willing to remember the bitter invectives and odious ſatires, publiſhed and circulated through the kingdom, againſt our fellow ſubjects of the north, or the indecent engravings expoſed in the windows of our print-ſhops, to the reproach of good manners and ſound policy, tending only to render us cheap in the eyes of ſenſible foreigners, and to increaſe the diſtractions; not to heal the wounds, of a diſunited people — I am ſorry to mention the conſequence: words and terms alluding to, and taken from the names of the chiefs of parties, began at firſt to be bandied about only in jeſt, but they have produced, private domeſtic quarrels, public tumults, riots, and diſorder, and have ended in being a military ſignal to cut one anothers throats.

All theſe diſorders and fatal errors might have been avoided, if you, my countrymen, on your part, had tried all the pretenſions to

Patriotiſm

Patriotiſm, by the ſtandard of the conſtitution, if you had well marked the progreſs of oppoſition; and had attended to the true definition of BRITISH LIBERTY,—and if Government on their part, had ſhewn leſs paſſion, diviſion, and diſtraction; neither puniſhing nor inflaming the body of the people by unpopular meaſures, which wore the appearance of attacking the privileges of the whole, to correct the licentiouſneſs of a few.

IN the following ſheets, I ſhall endeavour to fix the ſtandard of Britiſh Freedom or true Liberty, on the baſis of our excellent conſtitution, and to give you a teſt for the trial of true PATRIOTISM, by which you may examine your own pretenſions to the exalted character of PATRIOTS, and the claims of thoſe who have baſked in the ſun-ſhine of your favour, and have been juſtly termed the Idols of the people.

ALL our public misfortunes, which after all, are eaſier to be remedied, than ſome of our great men are willing to own, owe their origin, to your amazing credulity. The object of this addreſs is to undeceive you—to

proclaim

proclaim aloud — that you are a deluded people — and, however ſtrange it may appear, — boldly to maintain, for your comfort — that the exiſtence of the renowned Britiſh empire — as an independant free ſtate, is in no manner of danger; — that ſhe ſtill preſerves, — (and long may ſhe preſerve!) — her credit and influence with the ſtates of Europe; — that her public credit, with reſpect to her loans or funds, is built on a permanent foundation, if rightly upheld and properly managed; — that her national debt, is not any national grievance; — that her finances may be ſpeedily ameliorated — her national ſtrength recruited — and her natural enemy be called to reaſon, and commanded to keep the peace, whenever ſhe ſhall ſeem diſpoſed to violate it — if you will really ſhew yourſelves true Patriots — if you will lay aſide all odious appellations and diſtinctions, — all cauſeleſs jealouſy of your rulers; and cordially unite in promoting the public welfare of your country — if you will render the grateful tribute of loyalty, dutiful affection, and chearful confidence, to the beſt of princes, in return for thoſe exalted virtues he ſo eminently poſſeſſes, and which

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are the ſureſt vouchers of his affection for his people; — if you will rely on his princely word, who has juſt told you — " That the preſerv-
" ation of the religion, laws and liberties of
" his people, in every part of his dominions,
" he knows, is eſſential to their true happi-
" neſs, and therefore makes it the great object
" of his attention; "— if you will, as you ought, firmly believe our Gracious Sovereign when he adds, " Theſe are the principles which ever
" have been and ever ſhall be, the ſole rule of my
" government " — in a word, if you will follow his bright example, which, it is to be hoped, will ſooner or later diffuſe its ſacred influence throughout this wide-extended empire, — I will lead you on, not through the ſtreets, in wild uproar and tumults, to erect the ſtandard of Liberty with one hand, and violate the moſt ſacred rights of your fellow-ſubjects with the other, but, through the force of argument and mild perſuaſion, to immortal fame: — I will convince you Sirs! that it is thinking very meanly of yourſelves as ſubjects of this free ſtate, where every private citizen is the guardian of his own and of his country's honour and independance, and

where

where the very principles of the conſtitution are founded on general patriotic virtue, to imagine, that the glory, proſperity, and freedom of Great-Britain ever did, or ever will depend on the boaſted wiſdom, patriotiſm, ſuperior abilities or integrity, of any one of your fellow-ſubjects. — You are all joint truſtees of the ſacred treaſures of our conſtitution; and while you preſerve the character which is eſſentially neceſſary for ſubjects of a great maritime and commerical ſtate; while you are ſober, frugal, and induſtrious; and have a pious and virtuous monarch on the throne, all temporary encroachments on any of your privileges, (if any have been really made) will meet with their proper puniſhments, and the evil will be limited, and the remedy adminiſtered, without the neceſſity of engaging you all in the cauſe of any one man, who is left at liberty, if he is aggrieved, to obtain ſatisfaction of the agreſſors.

A QUICK ſucceſſion of adminiſtrations which you have loudly complained of, is a ſure proof that the errors and blunders of the king's ſervants are not countenanced; for when they have been diſcovered, a removal has generally ſucceeded;

ſucceeded, and I know no other conſtitutional remedy; for I believe it would ſurpaſs the wiſdom of Solomon, in this degenerate age, to fix at once on a miniſtry, equally bleſt with ſkill in public affairs, with humility, affability, and integrity, and poſſeſſed of ſuch fortunes and honours, as ſhould render them deaf to the calls of ambition or avarice, and above the ſhameful practice of making ſtipulations for themſelves and children, for the ſervices to their country. What means then are left, but reiterated trials to fix virtue, ability and integrity, in every department of adminiſtration. If theſe trials have been frequently repeated, and as often failed, aſcribe it to the frailty of human nature, and to the degeneracy of the times — always remembering how you yourſelves have been deceived in the Idols of your admiration. — The conſequences of your deluſion have been, and will be more deeply felt, than the leſſer evils that have ariſen from a quick ſucceſſion of adminiſtrations.

THE imbecile, puerile ſteps of weak or paſſionate miniſters, in the internal adminiſtration of government, are very ſoon rectified in this country; except in the department of the finances,

and as all the king's ſervants are anſwerable for their conduct, not only to the public, but to individuals, if they injure them in their perſons or properties, the removing them on the well-founded, orderly complaints of the people, the calling them to account in a parliamentary way, and abandoning them to the laws of their country, — which make no diſtinction of characters, evidently throws them into your hands; and therefore if you are virtuous, ſober, frugal, induſtrious, and as a conſequence of theſe characteriſtics, INCORRUPTIBLE — you will have choſen ſuch repreſentatives in Parliament; and will give ſuch inſtructions to them, that no ſet of miniſters will ever be able to enſlave, you nor to make any general attack on your rights and privileges — or ſuppoſing you the ſame virtuous characters, and any private citizen has been oppreſſed and injured in his perſon and property by an illegal exertion of authority in any of the king's ſervants — when this comes before you in your judicial capacity as jurors, you will find a verdict accordingly — I therefore maintain, that if any material defection from our excellent conſtitution has ariſen, or ſhall ariſe in this free ſtate, it muſt be originally owing to yourſelves.

THE

THE progreſs of oppoſition, and the effects it has produced may alſo fairly be aſcribed to my countrymen. Would to God! they were leſs fatal! and as eaſily remedied as the blunders of adminiſtration.

OPPOSITION has repeatedly triumphed within theſe few years by the frequent changes of the miniſtry, ſuppoſed to be brought about by the ſpirited conduct of minorities, coteries, &c. — but what fruit has the nation reaped from theſe political victories, which perhaps might be aſcribed ſolely to the gracious, benevolent diſpoſition of the Sovereign, willing if poſſible, by a conformity to their own ideas, to ſatisfy and content his people?

THE Chiefs once exalted into office, you have known them forget their colleagues, deſpiſe, ſpurn and perſecute them; ſo far they were ungrateful to individuals; this had nothing to do with their public conduct in your ſervice — but what became of all the dreadful apprehenſions with which they had filled your minds — all ſuddenly vaniſhed — the end of oppoſition being attained — the magic wands and ſeals

of

of office, change the fairy ſcene in an inſtant; and the pillars of ſtate which were ſhaken to and fro, by infernal furies, the harpies of avarice, fell ambition, and deſpotic fury — are now embraced by guardian angels, the faviours of their country: — ſerenity and tranquility ſucceed for a ſhort time, for you are pleaſed, — oppoſition has gained the day — the nation is repreſented to be in a flouriſhing condition, free from all danger foreign or internal, and ſurmounting every difficulty — " but yet a little while," and behold the fire-brand of popular diſcontent, exchanged by the laſt, for the lucrative employments of the ſtate, is taken up by a new party who, in their turn, tear off the angelic form of the reigning miniſtry, rekindle your expiring " fears for the impending ruin of the ſtate, " and wind up your apprehenſions to the high- " eſt alarm. You are ſaid to be an impoveriſhed " and heavily burthened public — a people " luxurious and licentious — impatient of rule " and deſpiſing all authority — with a declining " trade and decreaſing ſpecie — unfortunately " too — you have a government relaxed in " every ſinew — a corrupt ſelfiſh ſpirit perva-

" ding

" ding the whole — a ſtate deſtitute of alliances,
" and without reſpect from foreign nations—and
" a powerful combination of two branches of
" the houſe of Bourbon, anxious for an occaſion
" to retrieve their honour and weak their ven-
" geance upon her: "—the ſequel of this diſmal detail of our ſituation, for which you ſtand indebted to the author of *The preſent State of the Nation* lately publiſhed; will find a place in the following ſheets: ſuffice it here to obſerve, that this is no mean inconſiderable ſcribbler, but in all probability, an able politician, and a better financier, yet his ſtate of the nation, in whole and in part, is highly aggravated, as ſuch, I am bound in duty as a loyal ſubject, to refute it—here then you ſee oppoſition again inviting you to enliſt under its banner; and this has been your unſettled ſituation near ſix years in the midſt of profound peace—in which time, you have ſeen the moſt vigorous and prudent exertions of adminiſtration fail in the hands of one ſet of men by their being artfully rendered unpopular, in the ſame manner as you ſaw during the war—the moſt expenſive and ruinous meaſures carried into execution with alacrity and ap-

plauſe,

plauſe, becauſe they were projected or adviſed by the moſt renowned of all your idols — for whom you paved the way to a penſion, a title, and a coronet, —whom you madly followed in all the Alexandrian ſchemes of extended empire and conqueſt; and what then will you ſay to me, when I ſhall maintain, that territorial acquiſitions, eſpecially when uncultivated and unpeopled, are pernicious acquiſitions to a commerical iſland like Great Britain — and always coſt the nation an expence, to which no advantages to be derived from them in any ſhape, can poſſibly be adequate.

To this *your favourite*, O my Countrymen! what did you not grant?— a plentitude of power which no ſubject ever ought to enjoy — and what have been the murmurs, diſcontents, and open marks of diſaffection, ariſing from ſuſpicions never yet ſupported by facts, that the ſuppoſed *favourite* of the crown, had an univerſal influence in the councils of this nation!

But the author of the *preſent ſtate of the nation* informs you "that the preſent circum-"ſtances of this country bear ſo near a reſem-"blance

" blance in many inſtances to the condition of " the French nation, when Henry the Fourth " aſcended that throne, that meaſures ſimilar " to thoſe, by which that great prince reſtored " order and dignity to his Government, and " tranquility and proſperity to his people, can- " not fail of being attended with the like happy " effects in Great Britain." He then proceeds to acquaint you " that the confidence Henry " repoſed in the duke of Sully his miniſter, " and the firmneſs with which he ſupported " him, againſt the calumnies and intrigues of " thoſe venal wretches, whom he had made " his enemies, by reducing their *Penſions* and " cutting off the ſources of CORRUPTION " in the court, enabled that upright miniſter " to do theſe great things for the ſtate." —What great things? Why to lopp off unmerited penſions, uſeleſs fine-cures and expenſive, unneceſſary places — to reproach even an arbitary Prince, with the ſmalleſt needleſs expence — and thus to produce a reform in the finances, and repleniſh the public treaſury.

DOES the ſimilarity of circumſtances and of meaſures requiſite to be adopted in Great Britain only

only ſtrike us to day? — Will any man, with a court-kalendar in his hand, pretend to ſay, that places, penſions, or fine cures were not as numerous ten years ago, as they are at this moment?

WHO then was the upright miniſter, who at that time poſſeſſed the full confidence not only of the people, but after many ſtruggles, of the Prince too? And who inſtead of effectuating that reform in the finances, dropped every patriotic plan by degrees, and has ſince, "in private con- "ferences for arranging of miniſterial offices "dared to propoſe, to penſion thoſe whom he "could not place to his mind."

I LEAVE a deluded people to anſwer the melancholy queſtion, declaring that this retro-ſpective remark, is not the effect of party malice or perſonal animoſity, but ariſes from an honeſt zeal to prevent all ſuch deceptions for the fu-ture; and to eſtabliſh this undeniable political maxim: —

THAT the virtue of the PEOPLE conſti-tutes the preſervation of a free ſtate — not the boaſted

boaſted effects, of ſuperior abilities, in any one or two of its members; — nor is it poſſible, on the other hand, for any one ſubject of this realm however great, or noble, or highly honoured by his prince, while our conſtitution remains on its preſent footing, with all the ſuppoſed infringements of it lately imagined, to ſcreen himſelf from condign puniſhment, — if he has been guilty of any treaſonable practices; and certain I am, that no ſuch bad ſubject has really exiſted among us of late years; for if we look back into our paſt annals we ſhall find that few or none of ſuch traitors, though avowedly protected by the prince, in times when deſpotic ſentiments prevailed in the cabinet, could ſecure themſelves, behind the throne, from well grounded accuſations, honeſtly urged and ſupported by proper evidence of facts; — and if this was the caſe in former times, who will believe, that a real ſtate-criminal, generally unpopular, and ſurrounded by powerful enemies, could now evade their vigilance to detect and expoſe his treaſon? — Believe me my countrymen! had any ſuch really been amongſt you lately, he muſt have ſuffered ere now: — nor can we ſuppoſe it

poſſible that two thirds of the legiſlative power of this kingdom, amidſt the contentions of party ſpirit which has divided and ſubdivided its members — have been gained over to unite in concealing any real miſdemeanours of an unpopular nobleman from public view; — and if this be the caſe, then how hard is the fate of a prince, who cannot enjoy, uncenſured, the preſence, council, and advice of a ſelect friend — eſteemed in private life, to be the firſt of bleſſings.

To the candid, the rational, to men of reputation and property, this and the following ſheets are addreſſed — to the unthinking, giddy multitude I have only a few words of friendly advice to offer. —

Let me intreat you — men and brethren! ſince you are all turned politicians, and that even your wives and children diſcourſe of ſtate-affairs, with as much freedom as they do of domeſtic; and ſince this political vein which is ſpread over all the land, may be indulged very innocently when it is reſtrained within the bounds of decency and good order — to conſider, that you are all children of the ſtate, engaged in one common bond

or

or obligation, to promote the welfare of the civil ſociety you live under — to diſtinguiſh between true and falſe politics — between real and ideal Patriotiſm — between calumny and guilt; and, for the love of God, — to treat our ſtate-affairs, which, ſtrictly ſpeaking, are your own affairs, with that decency, good-manners, and filial reverence, you would obſerve in writing or converſing about your private concerns, to your immediate parents, patrons, or protectors — leſt our very name, hitherto illuſtrious above all others, become, through your means, a reproach and a bye-word throughout Europe, while we are regarded as men who have wantonly untied the bands of the beſt regulated ſociety on earth. — You are charged home, by the author of *The preſent State of the Nation*, for certainly it is you he deſcribes; for he never could mean to charge the whole body of the people of England *as impatient of rule, and deſpiſing all authority*; — but I am willing to acquit you on eaſier terms, and to believe, " that the dangerous and doubt-
" ful wars we have often been plunged in ſince
" the revolution, and the numerous taxes that
" have been levied upon the nation, to ſupport

" them, have given birth to that inquiſitive ſpi-
" rit for news and politics you have ſhewn for
" ſome years paſt, in like manner as the accu-
" mulating property in the public funds, created
" by thoſe exigencies of the ſtate, has immerſed
" the rich and opulent amongſt you in the ſame
" political fountain. — The fluctuations occa-
" ſioned in the ſtocks, by the riſe and fall of
" adminiſtrations, make *them* ever attentive and
" deeply engaged in diſcourſing and writing
" on public affairs, and the ſenſation of your
" taxes operate the ſame effect with *you*. —
" Sound politicians, and moderate ſtateſmen
" will not therefore blame you, for this ſpirit of
" inquiry into the ſtate of national affairs, while it
" keeps within the bounds of decency and good
" order. I will go farther; — they will allow it
" to be laudable, as it animates you to be bolder
" champions in your country's cauſe, when
" called forth in its defence againſt a common
" enemy; for you would never think Engliſh
" ground worth contending for, if it was not
" for the pre-eminence of Engliſh rights and
" privileges, which can only be known and
" underſtood, by political inquiry, and political

" com-

" compariſon of your ſituation with that of the
" ſubjects of leſs happy realms. — But the miſ-
" fortune is, you wretchedly abuſe, and ſadly
" miſapply the terms POLITICS and LIBERTY:
" here lies all your error; and in this error you
" are occaſionally confirmed and ſtrengthened by
" ill-deſigning men, on ſelfiiſh principles, who
" making the ſervice of their country their
" common pretext, and being known by you
" to be men of ſuperior education and abilities
" to yourſelves, you implicitly rely on them,
" till you are led on to inconſiderate acts of diſ-
" order, and to tumults, which are really ſedi-
" tious and treaſonable, if not in the act, yet
" in their tendency. — By theſe artful means
" you are often induced to form wrong and
" unworthy notions of the moſt virtuous rulers,
" and of the ableſt and moſt honeſt ſtateſmen;
" and to imagine, that a perſon cannot be a
" good politician, without being, at the ſame
" time, an errant villain, or an egregious knave;
" nor is it poſſible to reconcile you to the no-
" tion, that a ſtateſman, or courtier, nay, even a
" placeman, may be the friend of the people,
" and uſe his beſt endeavours to promote their

" intereſt

" intereſt and welfare. — If he is a ſervant of
" the crown, in your opinion, he muſt neceſſari-
" ly be bought or ſold; and therefore in none
" ſuch will you confide; — but you will have a
" a hero of your own, who ſtipulates to ſerve
" you without place or penſion, and pawns his
" word of honour, for the performance of co-
" venants; yet you have had ſo many heroes
" of a ſuperior caſt, within theſe thirty years,
" who were more liberal in their profeſſions,
" and had fairer occaſions of exerting them-
" ſelves in your ſervice, than your preſent *favou-*
" *rite* is likely to have, and who have all
" failed you for a name, a title, or a fortune,
" that I am really amazed at your credulity:
" however, it is by ſuch men, and ſuch ſpec-
" cious promiſes, never intended to be per-
" formed, that government, which is ever ſa-
" cred, and probity, which is eſſential to it, are
" repreſented as incompatible things, that can
" no more ſubſiſt together than contrary ele-
" ments can in nature, or oppoſite characters
" in one perſon."

It ſhall be the buſineſs of the following ſheets to aim at rectifying your judgements, and at re-

re-

reforming the public or external manners of my countrymen, by enquiring into the nature, and giving them a juſt idea of — CIVIL and RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, a right notion of POLITICS; and a chearful but true ſtate of their PUBLIC CREDIT and FINANCES for the improvement of which, I ſhall humbly offer a few plans or propoſals, with an honeſt intent to promote the general welfare of my country, without any regard to party intereſts, or to popular applauſe, which however I wiſh to merit: but as upon the whole, I ſhall appear to be a friend to government and to the adminiſtration of to day, though equally ſo, of that of to-morrow, if it ſhould pleaſe my Gracious Sovereign to change it this night. — It may be expected in order to remove all ſuſpicion and popular prejudice, that I give ſome little account of myſelf; — I therefore ſolemnlydeclare, on the word of an honeſt man, of a gentleman, and what is more of a chriſtian — that I am not of any party whatever — but a bare independant looker on, in this ſtate of Britain — yet a ſubject, and a moſt loyal one as any my Gracious Sovereign — late my royal maſter, — has, in his wide-extended domains. — I have

ſome

ſome little merit too with my countrymen, nay and with the adminiſtration. — Pardon the bare hint; — it is a merit few of our modern Patriots can boaſt — little as it is.

I HAVE been cruelly and unkindly diſcarded from the public ſervice, at a moment's warning, when defending at the peril of my own liberty, the lives of your braveſt ſubjects, Britiſh mariners, againſt an unwarrantable exertion of juriſdiction over them by the delegates of a foreign power, which might have ended in their death — the honeſt men were releaſed from their danger by my efforts, and they have paid me their grateful thanks in my preſent private ſituation in London; but my zeal in their ſervice was deemed intemperate; I believe it might, and I ſubmit: — the miniſter of a foreign power was not to be affronted; — but though I have not the reſource of a private fortune, yet will I not fill your news-papers with complaints againſt one ſingle man in the adminiſtration, for one alone has reduced m to my preſent ſituation, in which I am left with all the feelings of a gentleman, in the elegant term of the French, *ſur la pavé*; nor ſhall I be aſhamed

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to own that your favourable reception of this little piece, will be an aid to me in my private circumſtances — I have once had the happineſs to ſerve, and to pleaſe my countrymen even in this way — ſhould this publication prove as acceptable and be as generally read, I ſhall be ſupremely bleſt; and indulge the hopes, that ſome of my propoſals for the improvement of the public revenue may take place; in caſe I ſhall not need to demand a fortune — the benevolence — the gratitude of my countrymen — will beſtow it unaſked. —

If I ſhould be ſo unfortunate as not to merit your approbation, this imperfect account of myſelf can only make me known to the noble lord, in whoſe department I was removed from my ſtation, and thank heaven! the miſery in which that meaſure has involved me, cannot be increaſed. —

And now, my countrymen and fellow ſubjects, I will moſt heartily join with you in this pathetic invocation.

Do thou, Great Liberty! inſpire our ſouls,
And make our lives in thy poſſeſſion happy,
Or our deaths glorious in thy juſt defence.

CATO.

BUT let us be well aſſured that liberty and property are endangered, before we diſturb the good order of government, by publicly and indecently arraigning its meaſures — by contemptuouſly inſulting the diſpenſers of the ſacred laws of our country — by exaſperating our fellow-citizens, and by animating the giddy rabble to acts of lawleſs deſperation, which would be a reproach to the worſt of times — and that theſe are not the worſt, nor even bad times, I ſhall endeavour to convince you, in the ſequel of this little work.

Definition

Definition of Civil Liberty, with an Inquiry into the preſent State of Civil and Religious Liberty, and the Errors that have ariſen in England from a Miſunderſtanding and Abuſe of both.

ALMOST every modern age has produced political writers, on the ſubject of civil liberty, who have given us different definitions and ideas of this invaluable bleſſing, generally ſuited to the times and countries in which they wrote, but all agreeing in one point, that of all our earthly poſſeſſions it is the moſt valuable.

THE narrow limited notions of Liberty, have been moſtly the productions of writers, who lived under deſpotic Princes, in countries where it was neceſſary to preſerve the form and appearance of it long after the ſubſtance was loſt; the enlarged, refined and exalted ideas of Liberty, have flowed from the pens of men of the higheſt reputation for honour, integrity and learning, who have either happily flouriſhed in free ſtates, where this bleſſing was ſo fully enjoyed, that men could freely ſpeak and write their ſentiments on public affairs; and the admi-

niſtration of government — or have had the miſfortune to live in times when daring attacks were made on this invaluable privilege under the ſame free conſtitutions; and have boldly, but with decency, aſſerted and maintained the common rights of the ſubjects; againſt the lawleſs exertions of arbitrary and ambitious rulers; when the laſt has been the caſe, they have ſometimes,—to the reproach of humanity, and the eternal diſhonour of civil ſociety, — ſuffered ſhameful, ignominious puniſhment, nay even death, for holding up the mirrour of truth to a deluded or oppreſſed people; leaving to their poſterity the richeſt legacy they could bequeath to free-born men, — their immortal writings on the ſubject of civil and religious liberty.

It would be tedious, as well as unneceſſary, to recite the opinions of ſuch writers on civil liberty, who, from their particular ſituation, have given us partial definitions of it, that will by no means ſuit with the genius and temper of the inhabitans of Great Britain; for though the ſubjects of the moſt deſpotic governments in Europe warmly contend, that they enjoy this bleſſing

bleſſing in a ſuperior degree to their neighbours, Britons will never be brought over to their opinion; and though many fine writings have been publiſhed in republican ſtates, where liberty is likewiſe ſuppoſed to flouriſh in its greateſt latitude; yet as their notions do not accord with the fundamental maxims of our happy conſtitution, we ſhall be ſtill wandering from the point; and ſince, upon the whole, it can be fairly proved "that there is no nation in Eu-"rope, whoſe hiſtory affords a nobler example "than our own, of the ſpirit of liberty exerting "itſelf, at various intereſting periods, and for "a long ſucceſſion of time, in ſpite of almoſt in-"ſurmountable obſtacles, from the extenſion of "arbitrary power in the crown, combined with "accurſed miniſterial influence, and, at laſt, "happily accompliſhing its glorious end, by "founding and firmly eſtabliſhing, the nobleſt "form of government, on the true principles of "civil and religious liberty."—I cannot do better than to confine myſelf to the writings of my immortal countrymen, whoſe genius in every branch of literature is rarely excelled, and is unrivalled in this, for two reaſons,—Firſt, be-

cauſe

cauſe the liberty of the preſs has conſtantly made a part of the grand ſtruggles for the defence of public privileges; this therefore has neceſſarily produced a greater number of writings on the ſubject of civil liberty in general, than in countries where the freedom of the preſs either never exiſted, or exiſting, was never conteſted. — Secondly, becauſe the baſis of the Britiſh conſtitution being founded on patriotic public virtue, every faculty of the human mind has been exerted; and the learning and wiſdom of every age explored and collated, to preponderate the ſcale in favour of Britiſh liberty, in times of deſpotiſm and tyranny. — Our writers therefore, on this moſt intereſting ſubject, are as excellent, as they are numerous.

In a word, it is ſcarcely poſſible to offer any thing totally new, on this grand object of the literary purſuits of our anceſtors; but, at the ſame time, ſuch a ſimilarity of circumſtances often ariſes in the ſituation of public affairs, at different and far diſtant periods, that a review of the ſentiments of our ableſt politicians in former times, juſtly applied, may enable us

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to fix the ſtandard of true liberty, on the one hand, and, on the other, to trace, correct, and reform the errors and miſconduct of popular licentiouſneſs; and thereby to reanimate in the collective body of the people, that ſpirit of zealous loyalty and dutiful affection to our moſt Gracious Sovereign, and of univerſal harmony and benevolence to each other, which alone can render us a VIRTUOUS nation, and without which, all the efforts of popular heroes, on the one part, and of the wiſeſt and moſt upright adminiſtration, on the other, muſt prove equally ineffectual; — for if univerſal public virtue, does not prevail among all orders of men in the ſtate, it is in vain to talk or think about public liberty. A vicious, luxurious people may clamour as loud as they pleaſe; but it is impoſſible they ſhould be in earneſt about the welfare of their country, or the exiſtence and duration of its civil liberty: — it muſt be therefore ſome illuſive phantom they are eagerly purſuing; for were it true liberty, they would begin by inquiring at home into their own characters, and by obſerving how far the means are adequate to the end. — A vicious diſpoſition, a mind diſpoſed

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to be corrupted, a taſte for effeminacies in dreſs, for delicacies in food, and for expenſive living in general, beyond the reach and ſtation of each individual, cannot poſſibly be the characteriſtics of a people intent on deſtroying the ſources of corruption and venality, and aiming at the eſtabliſhment of none but men of diſtinguiſhed virtues and abilities, in the great offices of the ſtate.

An impartial reference to the moſt remarkable periods of the Engliſh hiſtory, when the greateſt ſtruggles were made in defence of public liberty really endangered, will ſoon convince you, that a virtuous, ſober, frugal people, may accompliſh great events for the honour of their country;—but that it is folly and madneſs for private vice to pretend to reform ſtate-corruption;—for private prodigality to ſtop the current of public profuſion;—for a people enſlaved to their own unruly paſſions and inordinate appetites, to obtain any ſignal victories over venal and corrupt adminiſtrations.

To avoid giving offence to any party, in the courſe of our inquiries into the nature of civil liberty,

liberty, no authors writing profeſſedly in favour of republican forms of government, with a view, perhaps, at the time, to introduce or continue them in England, ſhall be directly quoted, nor, on the contrary, any of the bold abetors of the extenſion of the prerogatives of the kingly office,—inconteſtible principles, adapted to the nature of our preſent conſtitution, ſhall alone be carefully laid before you;—leaving it to the curious and the learned to trace our references.—

"VIRTUE, in its moſt general ſenſe, conſiſts "in an exact obſervance of the laws of nature, "according to that ſubordination in which they "are placed by the Author of nature; which ſub- "ordination every man may diſcover, and muſt "acknowledge. This ſubordination requires us "to contribute, as much as poſſible,—to the "preſervation and happineſs of mankind in "general;—to the welfare of the particular "country, or civil ſociety, to which we belong; "—to the proſperity of our family and friends, "*ſo far as it is conſiſtent with the good of our* "*country*;—and, finally, to the preſervation

" of our lives, and the increaſe of our happi-
" neſs, *ſo far as is conſiſtent with the ſafety of our*
" *family and friends, and the good of our country.*"
If we acknowledge this ſubordination, *only in principle*, it muſt be, in the acting conformably to it, that all public and private virtue muſt be tried: — and in this ſcale of ſubordination, how low is the degree of *ſelf-love*, or *ſelf-intereſt*, which is the ſame thing. —

And where *ſelf-intereſt* has been fairly diſcovered to be the ruling principle of any of your modern patriots, how little does this ſketch — this outline of genuine virtue, render them! — Tarniſhed be their ſplendid coronets, by the unwholſome breath of contempt; —mouldered be their ermined robes, in the duſt of oblivion, — and erazed be their names from the annals of a free-born people! — But we muſt not ſtop here; — for if this be the mirrour of public virtue we are to hold up to this generation, much I fear, and much more I lament it, — that very few, after all their commotions in behalf of liberty, will ſee their reſemblance in it; no mobs will crowd and joſtle for room to regard themſelves in it. —

With

With averted faces, and a hand ſmiting a conſcious breaſt, too many muſt retire, to reflect that *ſelf-intereſt* led them on to trample on decency and good order, it was the ſale of an indecent print, or a ſeditious pamphlet; — while others, ſtill more inglorious by the weight of their iniquity, muſt recollect how often a promiſed temporary proviſion for themſelves or families, has borne down the good of their country; — if ever it has, in the abuſe of that ineſtimable privilege, — the election of the repreſentatives of the people, — with what face will ſuch ever pretend to to talk of liberty! — Yet much it is to be feared, that ſuch characters as theſe, compoſe the greateſt part of all tumultuous aſſemblies of the people, at a time when genuine virtue, cannot be ſaid to hold the ſcale of ſubordination.

Now the general rules of virtue, or the laws of nature, are always ſuppoſed to be the foundation of the laws of civil ſociety; and when theſe laws are made by the members of any particular ſociety, they become binding on every individual; and thus are denominated eſtabliſh-

ed laws; diſtinguiſhable from the changeable arbitrary diſpoſitions of any one ſuperior ruler, whoſe abſolute ordinances can only be called rules and regulations, ſubject to revocation at every ſuggeſtion of caprice, or inconſtancy in the mind of the chief governor.

THOSE ſocieties then, where the people are governed by eſtabliſhed laws, enacted by their own body, or by their repreſentatives, which is the ſame thing, are called free governments; and are juſtly eſteemed the beſt; — and thoſe ſocieties which are ſubject to the variable rules and orders of one man are deemed ſlaviſh, deſpotic governments; and conſequently the worſt —

FROM this definition of free and ſlaviſh governments, one remark, of the higheſt conſequence to us obviouſly ariſes —

" IN free ſtates, the people muſt enſlave
" themſelves, if they are at all enſlaved; for if
" the people are virtuous and honeſt, they will
" chooſe virtuous and honeſt repreſentatives; and

" ſalutary

" ſalutary laws will be enacted for the preſerva-
" tion of public virtue and liberty, — while
" in deſpotic ſtates, the virtue of the people
" will have no effect towards operating their
" happineſs, if they are ſubject to the rules and
" orders of a vicious and deſpotic monarch; for,
" by one ſingle act of deſpotiſm, he may en-
" ſlave a whole people." —

THE better to comprehend the diſtinction we have made between theſe two general governments, in which all the various forms of government in the world, whether intitled monarchial, ariſtocratic, or republican are compriſeed, we ſhall in this place, give the only true and unexceptionable ideas or definition of LIBERTY and SLAVERY.

" LIBERTY is a natural power of doing, or
" not doing, whatever we think proper, ſo far
" as it is conſiſtent with the rules of virtue,
" and the eſtabliſhed laws of the civil ſociety to
" which we belong."

" SLAVERY

"SLAVERY is a force put upon human nature, "by which a man is obliged to act, or not to "act, according to the arbitrary will and "pleaſure of another."

THIS ſtate of abject ſubmiſſion, the ſubjects of this happy realm of Great Britain, have been totally ignorant of, with reſpect to themſelves, ever ſince the revolution; while the ſubjects of all the monarchies of Europe have experienced it, in a greater or leſs degree, it will not therefore be neceſſary to enlarge on this topic, for the information of my countrymen.—Our inquiry then, ſhall be directed to the inveſtigation of the eſtabliſhed maxims of free government, and to the pleaſing taſk of diſcovering that the Britiſh conſtitution, as by law eſtabliſhed, and now actually ſubſiſting, is the moſt perfect form of government that the wiſdom of man could deviſe, for the full exerciſe of civil and religious liberty;—but while we eſtabliſh this truth, we muſt not forget that it partakes of human frailty; conſequently, that there is not any one period of time, neither the paſt nor yet the preſent, wherein it may be ſaid this admired

admired conſtitution has attained the ſummit of perfection; for it always was, ſtill is, and ever will be capable of amendment; "for though "Great Britain enjoys numberleſs bleſſings, "which other nations know nothing of, yet "there are others which they poſſeſs, that are "wanting to Great Britain."—For this reaſon, the true life and ſpirit of our conſtitution ought to be attentively ſtudied; and ſince the revolution effectually eſtabliſhed the liberties of this nation upon ſuch a firm and permanent baſis, that we have but very little to apprehend from any evil deſigns to degenerate our conſtitution: our chief care ſhould be to give it every amendment or improvement of which it is ſuſceptible. —"This ſurely is not to be effected by our "mobbiſh way of calling our rulers to account, "it may indeed lay ſome reſtraint on the exerciſe "of their power, but it will be very far from "conſtituting ſocial or civil liberty: ſlaves are "prompted by deſpair to acts of indiſcriminate "fury; but free-born ſubjects ſhould have re-"courſe to the laws of their country, for the pu-"niſhment of their rulers, if they have tranſ-

"greſſed

" greſſed theſe laws, or have committed any
" miſdemeanor in the execution of their office."

Our conſtitution conſiſts in a due mixture of the beſt part of the three general forms of government that have prevailed in the world; and this ſuppoſes a rejection of every thing that was found ſubverſive of an exact obſervance of the laws of nature, according to that ſubordination we have already deſcribed, in treating of public virtue. — An accurate inquiry into the three different branches of our conſtitution will ſhew us how far we have attained this deſirable purpoſe, wherein we are defective; and what appears to be wanting towards bringing this noble plan, to the higheſt degree of perfection.

By the Monarchial part of our conſtitution
" we enjoy this ſingular advantage, that as the
" executive part of our government, eſpecially
" with regard to foreign affairs, is veſted in the
" king; we thereby avoid the inconveniences
" and dangers that ariſe from the delays of po-
" pular councils, where long debates generally
" ariſe

" ariſe. But while we thus improve on the re-
" publican form of government, we equally
" guard againſt the arbitrary ſway exerciſed by
" deſpotic monarchs; for this power is origin-
" ally committed by the people to the king, and
" therefore though he can declare war, or make
" peace by his ſole prerogative, he is expected
" to lay the motives of his conduct before the
" repreſentatives of the people at their firſt en-
" ſuing aſſembly. — There is yet another au-
thority lodged in the crown in virtue of the mo-
narchial part of our conſtitution, which is a
diſpenſing power — in caſes of extreme neceſſi-
ty, ſuch as the apprehenſion of a famine — to
ſuſpend certain eſtabliſhed laws — as that for
the exportation of corn; but this is very rarely
exerciſed; and, by ſome political writers, is
declared to be repugnant to the ſtrict rules of
our conſtitution; it is therefore ſufficient to have
noticed it.

" By the Ariſtocratical part of our govern-
" ment, we are ſecured againſt the ambition of
" our kings; and of private men acting un-
" der their authority, for our nobles being en-

" titled by their birth and high rank, to very
" important privileges and pre-eminences, they
" are thereby the more deeply intereſted in the
" preſervation of the conſtitution, which is only
" to be effected by conſtantly ſecuring the
" rights and privileges of each branch of it,
" from incroachments or extenſions of power to
" the detriment of each other, and as from their
" ſituation they are neceſſarily ſuppoſed to be
" more connected with the throne than the
" commons, and more likely to fill the higheſt
" miniſterial offices under the crown, it is ex-
" pected from them that they ſhould be the
" guardians of the ſtate, againſt any attempts
" to enlarge the prerogatives of the ſovereigns;
" as it is from the commons, being the repre-
" ſentatives of the people; that they ſhould
" ſupport their rights and privileges againſt any
" ſiniſter deſigns of the nobles or the kings;—
" and eſpecially to watch with a jealous eye,
" every motion that tends to a cloſer union of
" the ſovereigns and the nobles, than is con-
" ſiſtent with that due ballance of the three
" eſtates, which conſtitutes the perfection of
" the whole ſyſtem of our government.

" By

"By the Democratical or popular branch of "our conſtitution, we remove all the incon- "veniences to which governments entirely "ariſtocratical are ſubject, ſince the lords with- "out the concurrence of the commons are de- "prived of all power and authority whatever; "and the ſame may be ſaid of each branch of "the legiſlature; for laws may be propoſed by "the commons, but if they are not approved "of by the lords and aſſented to by the king, "they cannot be eſtabliſhed.—In the ſame man- "ner the kingly power falls to the ground, if "not ſupported by the neceſſary exertions of "that authority, which is veſted by the conſti- "tution in the lords and commons.—Theſe "failing him, he is reduced to a worſe condi- "tion than many private men, his dependance "for every article of expence attending his "domeſtic concerns, his royal ſtate, and the "adminiſtration of his government reſting en- "tirely on the ſupplies granted by them in "parliament."

It cannot ſurely be neceſſary to add more, to ſhew that every precaution human wiſdom

could ſuggeſt, has been taken to ſecure our happy conſtitution from arbitrary, deſpotic tyranny, ſuch as is often exerciſed under abſolute monarchies; againſt the dangerous intrigues and factions produced by jealouſy and ambition in governments wholly ariſtocratical; and from the injuſtice and oppreſſion which reſult from popular prejudice, as well as the languor and delay in ſtate affairs, which prevail in republican governments.—But there is one peculiar excellence in this form of government, which deſerves particular notice, eſpecially at this juncture.—

The Commons of Great Britain aſſembled by their repreſentatives in parliament, may call the greateſt ſubject in the ſtate to account, and puniſh him for his miſdemeanours.—This, ſays a noble author, is what gives life to our laws and ſocial liberty to the meaneſt ſubject. No miniſter of ſtate, no officer of the crown is exempt from this juriſdiction, for the Houſe of Commons among other capacities in which they ſit and act, are by the conſtitution appointed the great inqueſt of the nation, to ſearch into all

all the oppreſſions and injuſtices of the king's ſervants; and eſpecially of the judges of the land — on informations being laid before this honourable houſe by impeachment, petition, or any other parliamentary proceeding, which is the only legal and effectual method of calling our ſuperiors to account.

THE Houſe of Lords among their ſeveral rights and privileges are veſted with the power and authority that denominates them, *the ſupreme court of judicature of the nation*, and enables them to redreſs the grievances ſuffered by the ſubjects from any wrong proceedings in the inferior courts of juſtice; and thus while it is hardly poſſible, that any man ſhould finally ſuffer by any ill grounded popular fury, it ſeems equally improbable, that any dangerous ſtate criminal ſhould eſcape with impunity; and indeed of this we may be well aſſured by attending to the great events of this kind, that occur in the hiſtory of our country.

" BUT our conſtitution goes a ſtep farther for " the ſecurity of civil liberty, regarding laws and " oaths as ties upon king and people—maintain-

" ing

" ing that the coronation oath, and the oath of
" allegiance are in effect but ſwearing to the
" conſtitution on the part of the prince to go-
" vern; and on that of the people to be go-
" verned, according to it —That the laws are
" the nerves and ſinews of the ſtate; and that
" as the ſupreme magiſtrate is above the peo-
" ple in his legal capacity, ſo is the law above
" the magiſtrate — and finally that he who
" makes himſelf above all law, may be a tyrant
" whenever he pleaſes.

On theſe principles our anceſtors proceeded when they depoſed weak or wicked princes who would not ſubmit to govern or be governed by, the eſtabliſhed laws of their country.—Having thus truly defined civil liberty, and found it to be inherent in our conſtitution, and that in virtue of it, every man may ſit more ſecurely under his own vine, than in any other country, if he will purſue the privileges he is entitled to in a legal way, let us now conciſely inquire into the real or pretended defects in our conſtitution, —they amount to no more than this — that parliaments may be influenced and corrupted by

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the crown, or the ſervants of the crown,— that a majority of placemen, penſioners and retainers of the court ſitting in parliament, may render the Sovereign in a degree abſolute, under the ſhadow and form of the conſtitution, — and that if the ſceptre happens to be in the hands of an ambitious prince, who ſcorns the reſtraint of limited monarchy, the freedom of the ſtate will be endangered if not overturned. We allow this to be the caſe; and indeed were we to attempt to deny it, the annals of England would but too fatally expoſe the truth.—But where does this defect, which is certainly a very great one, lie; in the conſtitution itſelf?—I once more recur to my grand political maxim, with reſpect to free ſtates: "it is the virtue of the people that "preſerves their freedom.—If therefore the people are virtuous, ſober, frugal, and induſtrious, they will chuſe honeſt repreſentatives in parliament, and they will put them to as little expence as poſſible in obtaining their ſeats, that they may not be tempted to repair their fortunes at the expence of the liberties of the people;—but if the people are vicious, idle, profligate, and expenſive, there is great danger

that

that they may be corrupted, and ſtill greater danger that the corruptors may ſeek to indemnify themſelves, by ſacrificing the intereſts of a degenerate people — But let us carry our inquiry a little farther, and aſk how it can happen that the body of the people, in a free and commercial ſtate, where the majority are employed in works of art and induſtry, become at any given period of time ſo generally depraved? — I anſwer, from a defect in the conſtitution, becauſe it does not tie the people down to the proper definition of civil liberty, — the power of doing or not doing whatever we have a mind, *ſo far as is conſiſtent with the rules of virtue; and the eſtabliſhed laws of the ſociety to which we belong*; but permits civil and religious liberty to degenerate into licentiouſneſs; and this proves what I before aſſerted, that though England enjoys many bleſſings which other nations know nothing of, there are others that ſhe wants, which they poſſeſs. —

A Few inſtances of this drawn from the preſent ſtate of civil and religious liberty in England

England will I flatter myſelf open a new ſcene of conſcientious inquiry, with all conſiderate people, and true lovers of their country.

We ſeem for a conſiderable time paſt to have been eſtabliſhing in theory and introducing into practice, a definition of liberty, the very reverſe of what has been here given, we openly contend for the liberty of doing or not doing things, *inconſiſtent with the rules of virtue and the eſtabliſhed laws of the ſociety to which we belong.*

To begin with civil liberty — In the ſhort analyſis of our conſtitution juſt given, we have ſhewn, that there is a legal method eſtabliſhed, by which the people may teſtify their juſt diſcontents, by which they may call thoſe to account, if any ſuch there be, who have ſacrificed the intereſts of the nation at the late peace, who have exerciſed an illegal miniſterial influence, or have plundered or miſapplied the public revenue — the path to a cool and generous reſentment, becoming a free born people lies open, nor has it been ſhut up within our

memory—by regular proſecutions, on legal proſecutions you may exerciſe your vengeance on the guilty—To theſe you have been ſtimulated by every provocative that malice, envy, or diſappointment could ſuggeſt, yet no ſuch proſecutions nor any tokens of them have yet appeared, to what are we to impute this, but to a want of facts to ſupport a well grounded charge againſt any man, or to a ſuppoſition which can ſcarce be admitted, that the ſuſpected party had all this time a majority in parliament, and ſtaunch friends at the helm.—If a majority in parliament, you are anſwerable for that ſituation of affairs, you have reſerved to yourſelves a power of inſtructing your repreſentatives, but after the ſtricteſt examination, I do not find that any inſtructions have been given from the firſt riſe of our popular diſcontents to this moment, to bring an inquiry into parliament in a legal method, into the conduct of any one ſuſpected ſervant of the crown; but I could point out numberleſs illegal, unmanly deſignations of perſons, on whom popular odium has been ſtampt with all the marks of malignity; and with ſuch tokens of ignominy; that a brave

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man would rather have died, than have ſeen himſelf thus laughed to ſcorn by an enraged people. To theſe I may add ſuch productions from the preſs as muſt aſtoniſh all Europe; and convince the ſober part of mankind, that the liberty of the preſs, the nobleſt privilege we enjoy; and which we ought to defend with our lives and fortunes; has been ſhamefully abuſed — for inſtead of being called in aid to ſupport and ſtrengthen the hands of government, or to aſſert and defend the real important rights of the ſubject — the preſs has been the channel for conveying to the public — fulſome panegyrics from the friends of people in power, plainly demonſtrating the weakneſs of thoſe adminiſtrations that could ſtand in need of ſuch pitiful ſuccours — and on the ſide of oppoſition; baſe invectives, deteſtable anecdotes of the private lives of men inveſted with public characters; and infamous expoſures of every weak part of our political ſituation, ſufficient to ſhew the foreign and domeſtic enemies of this country, that little or no patriotiſm is left amongſt our great people, ſince rather than loſe the malign ſatisfaction of attacking thoſe who hold the

ſeals of office, which they and their friends want to poſſeſs, they will lay open every public infirmity of our body politic, by publiſhing the moſt deplorable accounts of our declining trade, unſteady politics; and exhauſted finances, in pamphlets, which are eaſily conveyed to all quarters of the globe, and we are certain are bought up with avidity, and ſent abroad by the agents of the ſeveral powers of Europe.—How mortifying it is to an Engliſhman to be told by a ſubaltern French, or Auſtrian officer, "that our country is ruined, that our people are "a debauched, brutal mob, our miniſters a ſet "of raw, unexperienced boys, our S—— the "ſport of parties, our funds a bubble, and our "public credit an ignis fatuus which after en-"groſſing the attention of all Europe, and abſorb-"ing the property of the ſubjects of neighbour-"ing ſtates, will be ſuddenly extinguiſhed; and "leave the luckleſs adventurers in the abyſs of po-"verty."—Mortifying indeed, you will readily allow—yet how much more ſo, to find vouchers produced in a foreign land, from your own preſs, to ſupport theſe humiliating aſſertions, when from a true patriotic diſpoſition you are

inclined

inclined to take up the cauſe of your injured country, in promiſcuous converſation — none can deſcribe the ſenſations of an honeſt breaſt on ſuch an occaſion, but thoſe who have experienced them.—May it never more be my hard fate! — and is this the effect of the boaſted liberty of the Engliſh preſs — I anſwer no, it is the licentious abuſe of it grounded on a falſe definition of civil liberty — for the true freedom of the preſs conſiſts in, *an unlimited power to write whatever we pleaſe, ſo far as is conſiſtent with the rules of virtue, and the eſtabliſhed laws of the ſociety to which we belong* — but ſurely no man will pretend to advance, that bringing to light the vicious memoirs of private life barely to blacken public characters is conſiſtent with the rules of private virtue, or if it will not offend you in this polite age, ſhall I ſay, with Chriſtian charity and benevolence — much leſs will one ſingle grain of public virtue be claimed by the man who expoſes to formidable enemies, "united branches of the houſe of Bourbon" the party breaches, or the uncovered and defenceleſs poſts of our little renowned garriſon— not ſuch was the ſtyle of our admired political writers

writers of the laſt century — in them may be found the grand fundamental principles of ſocial liberty, and the nature of government founded upon them, explained and ſupported with ſpirit and energy, but at the ſame time, with decency and due decorum. — You will not there find the initials of the names of the miniſters of the times, with details of their private pleaſures, or diaries of their domeſtic concerns annexed to them — "nor yet ſtudied and regular arith-
" metical deductions to prove to all the world
" that we are on the brink of ruin as a nation,
" and that we cannot be inſured from inevitable
" deſtruction, but by transferring the entire con-
" fidence of our gracious Sovereign and of his ſub-
" jects unalienably, from our preſent rulers, to the
" inventors of theſe gloomy narratives." — Yet the eminent writers of the laſt century boldly ſtood up for the liberty of the preſs, and manfully ſuffered in its defence; and when they beheld glaring errors and mal-adminiſtration in government, they faithfully reprehended their rulers, but it was the correction of wiſdom they exerciſed, not the rod of fools and madmen — They were not libellers of the Sovereign, of his

ſervants,

ſervants, nor of their country—they inveſtigated the cauſes of the riſe and fall of ancient ſtates and empires, and by comparative reviews of different political meaſures, they accurately diſtinguiſhed true, from falſe politics; and paved the way to the fixing the real freedom of their country on a firm baſis; but their obſervations on government, were as generous and decent, as they were ſolid and convincing—the writers of our political pamphlets and letters on public affairs, cannot but be acquainted with the learned authors I have in view; and therefore as I have laid it down as a rule, not to make any mention of names paſt or preſent in this little work, it is hoped what is here advanced will be ſufficient to ſhew, that the liberty of the preſs may be preſerved inviolate, and yet that a due puniſhment may be inflicted according to law, on all thoſe who ſhall preſume to publiſh ſuch writings as are totally inconſiſtent with private and public virtue, as tend to the introduction of anarchy and confuſion into the ſtate, to the ſubverſion of the eſtabliſhed rules of internal adminiſtration, and to the impolitic diſcloſure of all the myſteries and arcana of our foreign

foreign policy, to our neighbours on the continent.

Let us now examine another effect of our falſe definition of civil liberty; and a very material one it is, — ſince it ſuppoſes every man in Great Britain, after he has paid his debts and legal taxes, to remain abſolute maſter of his property — to have a power to do juſt what he pleaſes with his effects, real and perſonal — he may fling his gold into the ſea, if he thinks proper — he may melt his ſilver into caſcades and rivulets — he may caſt his pearls to ſwine — he may diſinherit his children in a fit of rage, or luſt; and endow a foreign ſtrumpet with his revenues — or, what is worſe, he may depopulate a village, by pulling down all the little cottages on his eſtates; and thus, by depriving the induſtrious poor of habitations or fixed abodes — he may eraze the very foundations of family connexions; and, ſhould his humour become general, emigration and depopulation muſt enſue. — The king will loſe ſubjects; agriculture and the manufactures will want hands, the neceſſaries of life will become ſcarce

and

and the joint labours of a thin, riſing generation, where ſuch meaſures for depopulating a country are purſued, will hardly be ſufficient to ſupply food and raiment for home conſumption; ſo that all thoughts of producing a ſurplus for foreign commerce muſt be given up; — but this is not all, our free-born Engliſhman can go one ſtep farther — he can ſell his landed eſtate, change all his paper ſecurities, convert all his effects into ſpecie, into the beſt, the heavieſt gold coin of your country, weighty guineas; and, with the firſt fair wind, take a final leave of his native country; or, if this does not ſuit him — he may limit himſelf to a temporary caprice — Great Britain indeed, is furniſhed with every ſalubrious ſpring that Europe can juſtly boaſt; her viands are wholeſome, nay, delicate; the air of her different counties, joined to the eaſe and conveniency of travelling, ſeems to adminiſter a ſufficient change for valetudinarians; — the amuſements at the public places of reſort, for recruiting decayed ſtrength and exhilerating the ſpirits, are as well conducted as any in Europe: in fine, the general manners of the middle ranks of people are neither

ruſtic nor unſocial; — yet the ſon of liberty may annually rove to diſtant climes, to gratify his appetite, to decorate his perſon, to conſummate gallant intrigues, or to repair a broken conſtitution, and expend a princely revenue in the heart of your rival's dominions. To complete the ſketch of Engliſh liberty, as it is generally underſtood; —he may, on his return, evade the obſolete laws, for, I think, ſuch there are, "which "forbid a maſter of a veſſel landing foreign va- "gabonds, or perſons without means, on the "Britiſh ſhore" — import half a dozen of the moſt deſtitute, abandoned raſcals imaginable, *des gens ſans aveu*, as the French elegantly term them, under the denomination of his ſervants. — But what becomes of our true definition of civil liberty in all this deſtructive progreſs? —We have taken ſome pains to ſelect it from the beſt ancient and modern political writers; and we ſhall maintain it as uncontrovertible, till we are convicted of error. — It conſiſts then in a power of doing, or of not doing whatever we have a mind, *ſo far as is conſiſtent with the rules of virtue, and the laws of the ſociety to which we belong.* — We will ſtill try the liberty every free-born

Engſhliman

Engliſhman in our day aſſumes by this definition, and when we have examined each abuſe of it apart, as it relates to the civil ſociety of Great Britain, I am afraid we ſhall diſcover a very large groupe of ſtate criminals, who were never before taken into the account of the real grievances under which this nation groans, and which will farther confirm our maxim—"That the virtue of the whole body of the people, not of the "rulers, conſtitutes the welfare of a free ſtate."

Hide me, ye petty tools of oppoſition! that liſt of placemen and penſioners; aye, and of ſupernumerary offices too, which you have written in ſuch black characters. — Gracious God! theſe are but little ſcratches, in compariſon of thoſe deep wounds given to your body politic by the inhuman fiends — for, however dignified or diſtinguiſhed, I will not call them by any better title — whom I am now to try by the true definition of civil liberty.

Stand forth, all ye lordly owners of thoſe manors, whoſe eſtates compriſe many villages, hamlets; and anſwer at the bar of public virtue

— not as private men, but as relative members of a civil ſociety acknowledged to be the beſt on earth — to the charge contained in the following indictment, it ſets forth — "THAT, from "the year 1542 to 1580, there were 36 mar- "riages, chriſtenings, and burials in the pariſh "of ******, in the county of ******, "in England; and that, in the ſame pariſh, "from 1755 to 1765 there were no more than "4." — I will not waſte the time in ſhewing by progreſſive multiplication, what the number of people in this pariſh might have been in the preſent year 1768. provided due care had been taken to find proper employment for the poor, and to let them habitations on eaſy terms, it is ſufficient to inform you, that neither the ſword nor peſtilence has prevailed in this and many ſuch pariſhes, but a worſe ſcourge from heaven, flinty-hearted, or prodigal luxurious landlords, have ſwept away the inhabitants — it farther ſets forth "that moſt of the ſmall tenements "and farms having fallen into the lord of the "manor's hands, he has let the whole to one "or two ſubſtantial farmers; and the village "now reſembles a place that has been ſacked

"and

" and plundered, there being above fifty dwell-
" ing houſes and cots, uninhabited and falling
" into ruins." —

FELLOW *Citizens and Countrymen!* I humbly beg leave to be heard as council for my Gracious Sovereign, againſt thoſe criminals; their guilt is of the deepeſt dye; but I am ſorry to ſay you have been in a great meaſure the occaſion of it; for in the wild noiſe and uproar you have been making for ſome time about trifles, you have drowned the cry of the poor country labourer, artificer, and manufacturer, and have ſuffered the greateſt infringement on the laws of nature, which are the foundation of civil ſociety, to become almoſt general throughout the land; and while you have been employing your time in hunting down imaginary criminals, and in erecting trophies to imaginary patriots; you have let the moſt fragrant iniquity eſtabliſh itſelf and get to ſuch a height, that it has threatened you already with famine, and ſtill menaces you with much greater evils than the revolutions of adminiſtrations, the fall of ſtocks, or the weight of the national debt;

and

and while you have withheld your vote and intereſt from worthy men, merely becauſe they were ſervants of the crown, — have you ever once thought of the enormous guilt of avaricious or prodigal land-holders, who to hoard up wealth, or to ſupply the calls of unbounded luxury, have permitted the engroſſing of farms, and have depopulated the country.—I am afraid you have not been ſo well employed, therefore, permit me to tell you, that if the liberty of ruining our fellow-ſubjects be one of the glorious birth-rights of my countrymen, it is an apparent defect in our conſtitution; and unpopular as it may appear to you, perhaps you may be obliged to ſtand indebted to theſe decried placemen, to the officers of the army and navy, and to private gentlemen of ſmall eſtates, in their parliamentary capacity, to provide a remedy for this great evil—let me add, you cannot do a greater ſervice to your country, than to inſtruct your repreſentatives on this important point; and in order to animate you to this laudable ſervice, I will conciſely lay before you ſome of the moſt ſtriking grievances ariſing from rack-rents and engroſſing of farms;—it deſtroys all hoſpitality

and

and baniſhes humanity and benevolence.—Formerly our virtuous anceſtors reſided the greateſt part of the year, on their eſtates, and with ſuch frugal œconomy; that they were enabled not only to indulge a truly hoſpitable diſpoſition; but when bad ſeaſons, ſickneſs or any other unforeſeen calamity befell their honeſt tenants, to forbear the demand of rent; and even ſometimes to forgive or excuſe — (theſe were the terms then in uſe) a year's rent — the worthy landlord alſo, not having demeaned himſelf in the eyes of his tenants and neighbours, by the modern methods of canvaſſing for votes, preſerved the veneration, reſpect, and influence due to his rank; and by his frequent reſidence on his eſtate, often interpoſed his good offices to compoſe amicably, the little differences and contentions ariſing among the lower claſs of people, which now, by the non-reſidence or different diſpoſitions of country gentlemen, furniſh matter for the practice of the worſt part of the law.—The good lady too, *let no one deſpiſe my great grandmother's manuſcript Diſpenſary, from whence I draw this remark,* attended to the ordinary complaints and little accidental infirmities

mities that happened among the village hinds —ſhe had her balſams, her cordials and her ſtiptics, ſhe could revive the drooping, heal the ſlightly wounded, and adminiſter to the ſick in moſt common caſes; her remedies being ſimple, and innocent, if ſhe erred a little in judgement, it was not attended with any bad conſequence, and the poorer ſort were not thrown into the hands of deſperate empiries, nor reduced to penury, by the enormous charges of ſome hungry apothecary.—The poor cottager having all the neceſſaries of life to provide for a hearty, numerous family of children, as ſoon as he had thraſhed his corn, or reared a little live ſtock, was obliged to carry it to market; and as the quantity raiſed by a number of theſe poor huſbandmen, was conſiderable, and the neceſſity of parting with it urgent—ſo was the price moderate; but ſince wealthy farmers have become contractors for almoſt entire eſtates—proviſions of all kinds have been dear, and ſome very ſcarce, the reaſon is obvious, they can afford to withhold the commodity for a time from the market, nor have they been ſo intent on breeding poultry; and the ſmaller

cattle,

cattle, as on raiſing crops of corn for exportation, and breeding horſes for the ſame purpoſe.

But the moſt criminal part of this conduct relative to the ſtate; and which muſt finally prove highly detrimental to the parties themſelves is, the preventing population, which is the firſt object of attention in a commercial ſtate, where a ſufficient quantity of hands are wanting for agriculture the uſeful arts, and manufactures, for navigation; and to furniſh a conſiderable military force in time of war — what excuſe then can that man make to his country, who, by depriving the poorer ſort of all proſpect of the common conveniences of life, ſuch as a fixed habitation and employment; prevents marriage and perhaps occaſions many; who have not been bred up to any branch of trade or of the manufactures, to wander from their reſpective countries to engage in ſervile offices of little or no uſe to the ſtate in compariſon of the huſbandman, or to go abroad. — To add to the evil of engroſſing farms, a falſe ſpirit of emulation is ſet up amongſt the

farmers, and they are tempted to bid againſt each other daily, for new leaſes, till the rent of almoſt every eſtate in the kingdom is doubled, and who is to pay this advanced price?—The conſumers of all ſorts of proviſions,—theſe are ſome of the various evils already experienced by the nation in general, and by individuals, ſo that it ſeems neceſſary to apply ſome remedy without loſs of time, otherwiſe any temporary abatement in the price of proviſions will be but tranſitory, nor will even a long duration of it, remedy the more weighty evil, ſtated in the account of the pariſh of * * * * *.

I SHALL now attend to the diſpoſal of the revenues ariſing from rack-rents, and the engroſſing of farms—it has been already obſerved, that they are not ſpent in the counties where they ariſe; ſorry I am to add, that ſince the peace, many of them have not been expended in the kingdom; and if you want to be informed what became of them, and of the poſſeſſors, I muſt refer you to the regiſters of the *Lieutenant de Police* at Paris; and to the liſts of the company at the German Spa; on examining

theſe

theſe you will find, that they do not conſiſt of young gentlemen travelling to complete their education, whoſe expences are moderate, but of grown gentlemen and ladies, who finding themſelves totally *ennuyé* in England, have been learning to dance *french cottillions*; and to ſpeak, move, eat, drink and intrigue in the french taſte, at the moderate rate of from one, to ten thouſand pounds per annum, hence alſo ariſes a neceſſity to let the eſtate to ſubſtantial farmers, who will not plead poverty, ſickneſs, or any caſualty for delay of rent, but will regularly pay it half yearly, that it may be remitted to the banker, and furniſh a ready fund for the indulgence of every ſportive pleaſure, in foreign countries.

YET ſome few there are whoſe public and private virtue, has enabled them to ſoar above theſe ſordid means of increaſing their incomes, at the expence of their country, to theſe be the tribute of praiſe gratefully beſtowed; their example followed, would do our country more ſignal ſervice, than any public internal meaſure that has been adopted of late years, — as for

thoſe vultures, who thus tear out the entrails of their native land, we will leave them in the hands of a diſcerning people, truſting that they will never imagine ſuch men have any true idea of ſocial liberty; conſequently, are unfit to be made the guardians of that invaluable bleſſing. We muſt now forget however to obſerve, that in moſt of the ſtates of Europe, the idle expenſive emigrations of their opulent ſubjects is reſtrained and prevented by wholeſome laws—and though I tremble for my popularity when I attack even the falſe notions of liberty, becauſe they are prevalent, yet I will venture to declare my opinion, that ſome reſtriction might be laid on the ſummer elopements of our people of fortune, without infringing on true civil liberty.

I HAVE ſomewhere advanced, that though Great Britain enjoys many bleſſings other nations know nothing of, yet ſhe wants many that they poſſeſs. — It remains to prove this aſſertion; and to add to it, that this defect proceeds from our miſconceptions about civil liberty.

" IT is an ancient political maxim — *Intereſt*
" *reipublicæ ut re ſua quiſque bene utatur* — It
" is

" is the intereſt or the commonwealth that every
" ſubject ſhould make a right uſe of his own
" eſtate — wherefore, among the fundamental
" inſtitutions of the ancient Romans, contained
" in the laws of the twelve tables, obſerved by
" them as ſacredly, as the two tables or ten
" commandments were by the Jews, it is eſ-
" pecially provided — that a guardian ſhall be
" appointed and ſet over the perſon and eſtate
" not only of lunatics, but of all prodigal per-
" ſons. — This law, derived from them, hath
" been handed down to all the neighbouring
" nations of this kingdom, and has been ob-
" ſerved and enforced wherever civil ſociety has
" been cultivated from its firſt inſtitution to the
" preſent hour." — In Flanders and in Holland, I have met with many late inſtances of fathers confining their ſons for prodigality, huſbands their wives, and wives their huſbands; nothing is more common among the Flemiſh, yet the government of the Auſtrian Netherlands is popular; and, in many inſtances, particularly in the election of their chief magiſtrates, and the adminiſtration of their finances, ſo far as it reſpects raiſing ſupplies for the ſervice of the

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dowager empreſs queen their ſovereign, they preſerve a civil freedom equal to that of England, for no money can be raiſed but by the joint conſent of the three eſtates of Flanders, conſiſting of the nobles ſpiritual and temporal; and the deputies of the provinces. — Their method of proceeding againſt prodigal perſons, is as follows — The neareſt relations in the order of ſucceſſion to the prodigal, ſign a petition to the council of ſtate, ſetting forth the acts of profuſion the party has been guilty of, thereby diſſipating his real or perſonal eſtate; and after an impartial hearing of the cauſe, by examining of evidences, if the charge is ſuppated; the court appoints guardians, who are entruſted with the receipt of the eſtate, in order to apply a moderate part to the maintenance of the prodigal, ſuitable however to his rank in life; and to pay the reſidue into the treaſury chamber of the ſtate; or of the province in whoſe juriſdiction the eſtate lies, which is faithfully accounted for to the next heirs; but if the prodigal has a family, it is inveſted in the hands of truſtees for their uſe. — In caſe he is ſingularly vicious, or ſhews any revengeful diſpoſi-

tion

tion in conſequence of this arrangement, he is ſent to ſome monaſtery, where he is confined, but treated with great civility.—This law extends to all claſſes of the people, ſo that during my reſidence among the Flemings, it has frequently happened, that a tradeſman's wife has ſhut up her huſband for pawning part of the ſtock in trade, alienating their perſonal effects, and other ſimilar extravagances, the ſame has happened *vice verſa* of huſbands confining their wives—in theſe caſes, the relations of the accuſed perſon, not of the accuſers, muſt ſign the petition and enable the complainant to carry on the cauſe—however repugnant this may appear to the modern definitions of civil liberty—the Flemiſh government juſtify this proceeding, on a political principle.—Their Juriſconſults allow, that private vices muſt and will prevail in the beſt regulated ſtates; but they add, that it is the buſineſs of all wiſe governments to take care that they do not become public nuiſances.

" To Great Britain only this law, founded " on ſo good a principle, is wanting—not that

" England

" England is without its prodigals of every " rank and degree" — for I ſhall point out a ſpecies of prodigality among the lower claſſes of the people, while they were complaining of want of bread and of employment, when I enquire into the ſtate of our taxes — " and ſuch is " our national character, that we are ſaid to be " more addicted to extravagance and profuſion " in our public, as well as in our private con- " cerns, than any other people in the known " world" — not leſs ſingular is our method of evading the force of this charge — by accuſing all foreigners of a poverty of ſpirit; and conſtruing private frugality, domeſtic oeconomy, and every prudence, into meanneſs, ſtingyneſs, and twenty ſuch low deſpicable epithets. — But what muſt they think of our exalted ideas of civil liberty, when they daily hear of the ſad effects of our prodigality — " Wives that have " brought great eſtates left needy widows — " children of noble and illuſtrious families re- " duced to baſe dependencies; and to ſervile " ſituations highly derogatory from the honours " of their anceſtors, which were perhaps pur- " chaſed by merit, and maintained by laudable " frugality.

" frugality. — Noblemen and gentlemen for
" want of ſome ſuch reſtrictions as theſe pre-
" ſcribed by the Roman and the Flemiſh laws,
" —waſting and alienating their eſtates to ſuch
" a degree, that their poſterity are hardly able
" to preſerve their rank in life, and are under
" a neceſſity of demanding exorbitant ſalaries
" from their prince, and from their country, for
" their occaſional ſervices to either.

In the countries where the law of calling ſpendthrifts to account prevails, a perſon convicted of unlimited profuſion, beſides being declared incapable of managing his eſtate, is diſabled from entering into any bond or contract, and from being a witneſs to any inſtrument or deed in writing whatever — If a law of this ſort could be made, compatible with our conſtitution, many ſignal benefits would be derived from it not only to the public, but to private families, the extortions of uſury would be checkt — lands would deſcend unmortgaged to the heirs of the poſſeſſors—and the great profits drawn from private loans to young ſpendthrifts being at an end — the public funds would be-

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nefit by the regulation — " His majeſty has his " *breve de inquirendo de idiota* and his *breve de* " *inquirendo de furioſo*, and no ſolid reaſon can " be produced why he ſhould not alſo have " his *breve de inquirendo de prodigo* directed in " like manner to the eſcheator of the county, " to be tried by a jury"—that ſo a general ſtop may be put to the wild expences and extravagant profuſeneſs of our countrymen. —

I AM aware that it will be urged by the oppoſers of this ſcheme, that the diſſipation of individuals is not productive of any bad conſequences to ſociety — in anſwer to this — we will ſet aſide the influence of bad example on the community, and we will grant, for a moment, that the ſpendthrift promotes circulation — and that property only changes hands — but will this counterballance the account of the revenues of alienated eſtates, or the yearly incomes of unalienated lands, expended madly or idiotically, in the capitals of foreign countries — In one of theſe — to the diſhonour of this renowned empire; and to the diſgrace of a noble family — a young Britiſh peer of the firſt order, — in

— in the bloom of life, has long been immured—for after languiſhing in the common priſon many months, till his creditors were alarmed for his life, the horror of the place having brought him to the verge of death — he has been for theſe two laſt years conſigned to the care of an order of mendicant friars, called *les freres celebreux* who uſually have the charge of prodigals in that country — yet I am certain that unleſs the *breve de inquirendo de idiotica* be made to include the *breve de prodigo* — this unfortunate nobleman cannot be conſtrued a lunatic in any other ſenſe — but ſo it ſeems his family deem him, or ſurely ſome meaſure would have been taken to reſtore him to his country. — In the capital of another foreign country, a Britiſh ſubject not long ſince exhibited a very ſtriking inſtance of that profuſion which may be juſtly termed idiotical — He preſented to a celebrated courtezan, a pair of gold candleſticks for a ſideboard, the workmanſhip of the king's goldſmith — his re- ward was — this reproof — "none but "an Engliſhman," ſo the french term all Britons, "could have been ſo *gauche*, ſo aukward and

" unpolite, as to omit the ſnuffers and pan of " the ſame metal."—

I HOPE my countrymen are by this time convinced how neceſſary it is to fix ſome boundaries to private liberty, that it may not by its mad operations finally overturn the freedom and independence of the ſtate.

BUT there is another ancient political maxim adopted by many of our neighbours which I muſt likewiſe lay before you — it is, that no man ſhall be allowed to diſpoſe of his real or perſonal eſtate to aliens, to the detriment and diſinheriting of his wife, his children, or his neareſt relations—in ſome countries a man may leave a third of his perſonal eſtate according to his fancy, or the dictates of his caprice — but in others, even this privilege is denied — and I know of none, except England, where an inhuman, paſſionate or luſtful parent has it in his power, to diſinherit his children, or to leave his perſonal eſtate to aliens — nor where a lewd huſband may leave behind him a diſtreſſed wife; and enrich a ſtrumpet — or which

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is nearly as bad, marry his menial ſervant on the demiſe of the mother of a race of children, who have been educated ſuitably to that mother's birth and fortune, and leave all his effects, to this low-bred huſſy his ſecond wife — it will be ſaid, jointures and ſettlements prevent this, but if a ſtrict inquiry were to be made into the cauſes of the decline of ſeveral wealthy families; and the poverty of their deſcendants, it would be found, that they are but a weak barrier to the evil I am deſcribing; beſides, very large fortunes are often rapidly acquired by commercial tranſactions, among thoſe claſſes of the people, who are not generally accuſtomed to make jointures and ſettlements; and it is in the middle rank of life, that the moſt ſingular characters are to be found in England — they generally proceed upon this vulgar principle, derived from their notions of Liberty — have not I got it?—is it not all my own?— ſhall not I leave it to whom I pleaſe?— no vulgar error wants exploding more than this — and ſo, my countrymen, you glory in ſavage Liberty! a licence to act contrary to the laws of nature and of public and private virtue, — a Liberty ſhocking

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ing to humanity, to abandon to the mercy of the world, the firſt fruits of your ſtrength, of your conjugal embraces — Heaven grant you a greater portion of virtue, than is the lot of moſt men in this licentious age — or the Britiſh conſtitution a power of grafting on the Flemiſh ſtock, without wounding civil Liberty, though ſhe give to the whirl-winds your popular, airy phantom of it — ſurely no conſiderate lover of his country will be offended at my honeſt warmth — it is time " to cry aloud and not to ſpare" — when the modes of France are ſo interwoven into our very frames — that the ſober, the frugal, the induſtrious citizen of London, is almoſt transformed into the *petit maitre de* Paris — and when the old ſtate of conjugal infidelity has changed ſides — for it is no longer the city ladies who fix ridicule on their huſbands — the gentlemen citizens now openly avow their infidelities, they are the common ſubject of their nocturnal revels — and to add to their groteſque characters — they purſue their game with a French *couteau de chaſſe* at their ſides — pardon my trifling on this ſerious ſubject — it is indeed a melancholy reflection — that we are

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ſo far loſt to all ſenſe of public virtue — that we will not ſubmit to the leaſt reſtraint, nor even conceal our vices from a riſing generation, who, catching the infection, are now as bold arrogant and aſſuring at ſixteen, — as if they had the knowledge and experience of forty years — perhaps general obſervations on the capricious diſpoſitions of ſome parents, and the daily accounts of unequal marriages between age and youth, — of ſtrange wills; and unaccountable bequeſts — not known in any other country, may have looſened the ties of filial affection too much, if ſo, it is high time the ſtate ſhould provide a remedy — for in thoſe countries where theſe ſtrange alienations of property are not allowed to take place, filial reverence and parental affection are much better kept up than among us — bigots would place this to the account of religious obligations; but I am apt to think the true cauſe is here aſſigned. —

Once more let me remind you, my fellow citizens and countrymen — " that on the public

" virtue

" virtue of the whole people depends the pros-
" perity of a free ſtate."

NOTHING repugnant to this principle then, muſt be admitted into your commercial views as a nation — yet I much fear that *the corrupt ſelfiſh ſpirit* which, the author of the preſent ſtate of the nation complains of, *as pervading the whole!* here exerts its baldful influence; and that from all-groſſing avaritious views, you will ultimately blaſt your own deſign; and by ſtraining for every profitable branch of commerce, throw aſide all thoughts of the political ſtate of trade — yet every branch of commerce before it is carried on, ought to be politically conſidered, or great detriment muſt enſue to the ſtate — individuals may be enriched, but the nation may be ultimately injured. — The immediate occaſion of this remark is, — a review of ſome branches of commerce which have been carried on from England ſince the peace, — which may have been beneficial to the merchant, but we muſt now inquire if they were not prejudicial to the ſtate.

It is the exportation of horſes to France, Flanders and Germany—and of ordnance ſtores to France that I am afraid will not appear to be politic or beneficial to the nation—The increaſe of the breed of horſes muſt require an increaſe of meadow and paſture land—it muſt likewiſe increaſe the conſumption of oats for thoſe animals, which ſtill conſtitutes a part of the food of the inhabitants of the northern counties of England; and of all Scotland—it is plain then, that there muſt be an additional quantity of land employed for the raiſing of oats, or the people muſt conſume a greater quantity of wheat; if the former, the leſs land will be cultivated for wheat—if the latter, then the quantity of wheat uſed for home conſumption muſt diminiſh the export; and in bad ſeaſons a ſcarcity muſt enſue, which will finally operate pernicious effects, by raiſing the price of proviſions and conſequently of labour—the queſtion then is, whether we may place the exportation of horſes in competition with the exportation of wheat, as a national benefit? I believe no merchant in London will admit of the compariſon—and indeed the increaſe of horſes

was already become a grievance before we added to it, that detrimental branch of commerce, the exportation of them—for whoever conſiders the increaſe of private carriages of all ſorts, of public ſtages; and of poſt-chaiſes; and how ſoon the horſes of the latter are either killed or rendered unfit for ſervice, ſo that freſh ſupplies are conſtantly wanting; will readily conclude, that the growth of wheat muſt have been diminiſhed in proportion to the quantity of land wanted for paſturage, hay, and oats.—It therefore ſeems political to check the increaſe of the breed, and I ſhall reſume the ſubject, when we have the public revenue under conſideration—As to the export, nothing appears more impolitic, than our mounting all the French cavalry—our regiments of light horſe in the laſt war performed wonders, they were an improvement in the military ſcience, and is it right to furniſh them with the means of equalling us in this newly acquired advantage?—the anſwer is, it is a ballance of trade in our favour—and it ſhall be brought to account—we will give the French nation credit for this return of our ſpecie, remitted to their capital for the maintenance of

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our prodigal ſons — and in another place we will alſo bring to account ſome trifling ballances of trade not in our favour, which have eſcaped the notice of one of the greateſt financiers in this kingdom — who is ſuppoſed to have furniſhed all the materials dependant on arithmetical calculation, to the author of *the preſent ſtate of the nation* — perhaps they were unworthy his notice, but a candid nation will excuſe my honeſt zeal, even if they ſhould not appear to be of the very laſt importance.

But there is another branch of our commerce with France which ſeems more impolitic — It is the furniſhing them with complete ſtands of arms; and with ordnance ſtores—the firelocks in general uſe among the military in France are badly wrought, they are ſubject to ruſt ſooner than ours, and ſome other inconveniences are complained of, the exact detail of which I could not procure — but I ſaw ſeveral cheſts of arms landed at Dunkirk at different times, towards the cloſe of the year 1767, which were publicly opened, and contained muſkets for different regiments, particularly for

the Iriſh brigades, all exactly marked, numbered and aſſorted for each regiment — and in March laſt 20 cheſts more were landed there, the maſter of the veſſel being aſked, if he knew their deſtination when he ſailed from London, ſaid, he apprehended they were for the Weſt Indies—with reſpect to ordnance ſtores, the following extract from a letter on that ſubject, will beſt explain the nature of that branch of commerce:

Dunkirk, January 28, 1768.

SIR,

I could not get a ſatisfactory account till yeſterday evening, which is as under — Cannon from England, in the year 1767—*Four thouſand tons, from the founderies at London and elſewhere — tranſacted in the following manner— Old ordnance is ſent from this port to England, and is ſold to the maſters of the founderies at a certain price per hundred weight — in return they ſend over new cannon and mortars, and to every piece of cannon or mortar there is* 50 *ſhot from* 2 *to* 8 *pounders, ſome time ſince there came in one veſſel —* 100 *cannons and mortars with* 50 *ſhot to each — ſoon after their*

their delivery here, they are ſent to other ports in France, as is the ſhip timber in like manner.—

I am, &c.

It does not appear from this account, what the peculiar benefit is to the maſter of the founderies; but we plainly ſee that it is not an entire ballance of ſpecie in our favour, only an exchange of commodity: it is ſent to England to be wrought up — it will be ſaid, we have the profit of the labour of our people, but will this partial profit to a few individuals compenſate for ſupplying the houſe of Bourbon, "which "is repreſented by the author of *the preſent ſtate* "*of the nation*, to be fired with reſentment at "the peace, ſhe was obliged to make on hu- "miliating terms, and anxious for an occaſion "to retrieve her honour and wreak her ven- "geance on us" — with our beſt horſes to mount and improve their cavalry — with our well wrought firelocks that will not diſappoint their infantry in the day of battle—or with warlike ammunition and ſtores, for fortifying the ramparts of their garriſons, and recruiting their magazines — in moſt of the garriſons of France you may now ſee new ſets of guns mounted on the

the works, that have been caſt in England ſince the peace — I have not room in this little work, which muſt contain more important matter, to make farther reflections on the ſubject, it is ſufficient that government is well informed of this operation in commerce; and that the body of the people have the fact here ſtated to them, with a view to prove, that liberty in commercial points, as well as in affairs merely political, may be miſunderſtood.

THERE is alſo a kind of commerce carried on from Ruſſia, which ſeems to me to envellop a myſtery of no friendly nature to this country, if I am miſtaken, my pardon may be pleaded, from the candour with which I mention it, eſpecially as I withhold from the public for the preſent, the vouchers of the fact, leſt I ſhould injure the characters of the party concerned, till I have the general voice of my countrymen on the ſubject, promiſing at the ſame time, that if it ſhall appear to carry with it the pernicious deſign I ſuſpect, no intreaties ſhall engage me to conceal them.

The fact ſtands thus; a merchant in London contracts for the building of ſhips, at Onega and Archangel, of the following burdens: from 250 to 750 tons; an Engliſh maſter and mariners are ſent from London to navigate theſe veſſels, they hoiſt Britiſh colours as ſoon as finiſhed; and I ſuppoſe the owners derive ſome advantages as Engliſhmen, from our treaty of commerce with Ruſſia — theſe ſhips are loaded with maſts and timber fit for all the purpoſes of conſtructing men of war; and then ſail directly for the port of Dunkirk, which they enter with Britiſh colours; but as ſoon as the maſts and timber are landed and depoſited in the French king's magazines — the Engliſh maſter and ſeamen are diſcharged by the French broker, to whom the ſhips are conſigned; — and French colours are put up. Sometimes previous to this ſtep, there is a formal ſale of the ſhips — "part of the cargo of one of theſe ſhips was lately embarked on board one of their old crazy flat bottom boats, for Rochelle, and was loſt in a ſtorm off our coaſts" — as we have no conſul at Dunkirk, the illegality of diſcharging Britiſh ſeamen in a foreign port paſſes unnoticed, as indeed all

all the remarkable tranſactions of that famous port — which ſo highly merits the attention of Great-Britain — that I will maintain in this place, and will ſupport it perſonally if called upon — that it would be highly advantageous to this kingdom in general, and to the managers of the public revenues in particular, to employ and keep in conſtant pay, ſecret agents in this port and all along the coaſts from *Sluys* in Flanders to *Boulogne*, — I am informed, the miniſter who had the adminiſtration of the finances in the year 1764; and who certainly underſtands that department as well as any man in England, though he failed in other branches of his miniſterial function, happily ſucceeded in this; and received ſuch intelligence as proved very beneficial to the public revenue. — .

It is to be wiſhed however, that ſome inquiry were made concerning the uſe intended to be made of theſe ſhips — the deſtination of their lading we have already pointed out — perhaps they may be found to be properly calculated for tranſporting troops, and to anſwer

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all the purpoſes of invaſion—if otherwiſe; and that there is nothing illicit on the part of a ſubject of England reſiding in London, in this tranſaction: the hint will be ſufficient for him to clear up the matter, and therefore with him and the public I leave it.

But I cannot quit the port of Dunkirk ſo readily, as it affords me the moſt ample occaſion to enlarge on the ſubject we are upon:—the errors ariſing from our falſe conceptions of civil liberty in a commercial view—"a people "luxurious and licentious," cannot fail of producing a plentiful crop of bankrupt tradeſmen —of perſons engaged in divers commercial connections, who finding themſelves in an inſolvent ſtate,—collect together the amount of all the effects they are able to alienate ſecretly; and take a final adieu of their country, inſtead of compromiſing matters with their creditors and delivering up theſe effects in part of payment. —Dunkirk affords them a contiguous, cheap, ſafe, and profitable aſſylum;—to this port they may retire with a fair wind in twenty-four hours—for no queſtions are aſked, on leaving

this free country!—this land of liberty!—where every man is entitled not only to ruin himſelf; but, as much as in him lies, to deſtroy his native country—

But let us ſuppoſe, among theſe fugitives, there are a few ingenious mechanics and manufacturers: it is not ſufficient that theſe tranſport themſelves and families with a little pocket-money—they muſt alſo have their *tools* and *the implements of their art*; for they cannot make them of equal goodneſs on the continent—theſe then are conveniently ſhipped, under the denomination of captain's ſtores—and thus we furniſh our dreaded enemies, with arms military and civil for our deſtruction—while all parts of the continent, purge themſelves of their ſcum, to uſe the elegant ſtyle of Shakeſpear; "for "if they have a ruffian that will ſwear, drink, "dance, commit the oldeſt ſins the neweſt kind "of ways," the ſtrict police of our neighbouring kingdoms renders their abode in their own country dangerous, and their ſubſiſtance precarious; ſo that on a general peace, hither they reſort, chiefly under the denomination of ſervants

vants to our inconſiderate people of quality, though, in fact, they are diſguiſed contraband traders, of which I have melancholy, undeniable vouchers — This is the exchange we make for uſeful artiſts and manufacturers, who, during the late high price of proviſions; and of all other neceſſaries and conveniences of life, were ſeduced by foreign powers to leave their country: and here I muſt in juſtice obſerve, that in the year 1766, the moſt vigorous meaſures were taken to prevent theſe deſtructive emigrations, by the noble general who then held the ſeals of the northern department; particularly by tranſmiting to the king's miniſters and conſuls, the acts of parliament relative to this matter, which occaſioned the return of ſeveral manufacturers and artificers:— deluded men! were all others, who may be tempted to this raſh meaſure, duly informed how meanly, how poorly the beſt artificers and workmen are fed, cloathed, lodged, and paid in foreign countries, theſe ſeductions would be at an end—yes my poor countrymen, lamentable is your miſtake when you quit this your native land—which, with all its imperfections on its head—is a paradiſe for the huſband-

man, the uſeful artiſt, the manufacturer, the ſeaman and the ſoldier — in compariſon of any other under the copes of heaven — and would you but lay ſome wholeſome reſtraints on yourſelves at home, which will be impoſed on you by the hand of power abroad — I will maintain it, the loweſt amongſt you would taſte the enjoyments of life in a degree ſuperior, to moſt of their citizens of the better ſort — whom I ſaw for ſeveral months, partly ſubſiſting on Carolina rice, the produce of your colonies, while ſome of you were riſing in London on account of the dearneſs of wheat: — yet if you go abroad, you muſt live as the reſt of their workmen, or the produce of your labour will be too dear for their markets, which they will take care to prevent; by paying you only ſuch wages as will barely enable you to purchaſe the moſt ordinary food and cloathing — though to entice you over, they make you the moſt ſpecious promiſes, and give you ſome temporary encouragement — two inſtances near home, may be uſefully given, to deter you from the deſtructive, illegal meaſure, of entering into foreign ſervice. —

NEAR the capital of the Auſtrian Netherlands, reſides an abandoned wretch, who fled from his country, after having been guilty of a breach of truſt, and carried with him the art of making coporas, aqua-fortis, and oil of vitriol. For a long time, he ſubſiſted on the money he carried out of England; and when that was exhauſted, he in vain ſollicited ſeveral private perſons of property to be concerned with him in erecting his works; but though he gave undoubted ſpecimens of his ſkill in this important art, the wary Flemings refuſed to engage. At length the miniſter, one of the moſt ſagacious, and at the ſame time, one of the moſt arbitrary ſtateſmen in Europe, engaged the council of finances to encourage the man upon ſtipulated conditions, and they are ſuch my countrymen! as none but an abject, guilty, deſpairing criminal would have accepted of. He is the ſlave of the government—he has ſpies to watch his every motion — he has been obliged to reveal the ſecrets of his art, leſt they ſhould die with him—he cannot abſent himſelf a league from the place where his works are eſtabliſhed, without attendant private guards to prevent his eſcape; and

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the rumour of an attempt to get him from them, idly propagated by the maſter of an Engliſh veſſel, alarmed all Flanders, as indeed it well might; for inſtead of our ſerving this country with oil of vitriol and aqua-fortis, they now ſerve many of the capital dyers in Holland and France, and have laid a duty on ours, equal in its conſequences to a prohibition: — yet this great, this important manufacturer, has a ſcanty ſalary, goes badly cloathed, is allowed little or no time for recreation, is neither eſteemed nor viſited by any, but the people immediately concerned in ſupplying him with glaſſes or other articles for his works, is reduced to converſe with his menial ſervants, to be at their mercy, in an old caſtle, which looks more like a priſon than the habitation of a freeman, a citizen of London; and, is to all intents and purpoſes a ſlave for the remainder of his life. — At Tournay, in the ſame juriſdiction, are three families under the ſame bond of ſubjection, in the china branch, ſeduced from the Bow, Chelſea, and Staffordſhire manufactories; — nay even as far as from Vienna, likewiſe under the the dominion of the houſe of Auſtria, I have recieved the complaints

of

of my unhappy countrymen, ſeduced from our metal button and hard-ware manufactories at Sheffield and Birmingham, by the moſt ſpecious promiſes, and yet tied down, after their arrival, to the moſt abject terms. — I am the more particular in giving inſtances of the fate of my countrymen under the dominion of the houſe of Auſtria, becauſe the miniſter I have hinted at, is a judge and patron of arts and manufactures, is affable, eaſy of acceſs, of a moſt inſinuating addreſs, a pretended friend and admirer of every Engliſhman, and the beſt qualified of any man on earth to recover the flouriſhing ſtate of commerce, and of arts and ſciences, which the Flemiſh enjoyed in a ſuperior degree, till the perſecuting ſpirit of popery deprived them of it; and under him they have made very haſty ſtrides towards retrieving their commerce and manufactures—of theſe neighbours then, who are now allied to France, and of ſuch an able miniſter, we have juſt reaſon to be jealous; as well as to be attentive to all their motions.

Permit me now to obſerve, that it is a great pity ſome meaſure could not be taken, compatible

tible with the true notions of civil liberty, to prevent the free, unqueſtioned ingreſs into, and egreſs from this kingdom,—as is the practice in all the other ſtates of Europe, even in the commercial, republican ſtate of Holland:—for want of ſome ſuch regulation, the facility of eſcape from England, but eſpecially from London, encourages all kinds of robberies, public and private, defrauding of creditors, and ſeduction of uſeful ſubjects— while, on the other hand, the ſame facility of landing in all parts of the kingdom, without the leaſt perſonal examination, fills the capital with ſecret vipers, and a variety of agents on private deſigns, who could not meet with ſuch ſucceſs in any other nation upon earth.—It is from the mercantile body that ſuch relief muſt be expected, for the hands of government are tied up—adminiſtration dare not take the neceſſary ſteps for this purpoſe, leſt they ſhould be deemed infringements on your commercial liberties.—God forbid they ſhould deprive you of any valuable privilege, or break in upon the true civil liberty of this country!—but unleſs you yourſelves will ſollicit the proper reſtraints to be laid on the falſe

notions

notions of this bleſſing — no good police can be eſtabliſhed, no internal meaſures be taken, to prevent the evil diſpoſed, from ruining your commerce; and you may expect to ſee it taken out of your hands by your neighbours — it is the public virtue of all men of reputation and property, that alone can ſave you; and you are admoniſhed in time, for notwithſtanding the deplorable picture that has been drawn of your ſituation, —your trade is not yet on the decline, nor are you an impoveriſhed people — but "luxurious and licentious," you certainly are; and if you will not reform and refrain, you may in time be an impoveriſhed people alſo, — I believe however, the day is far diſtant, and if the interval be properly employed, it will be ſtill more remote — perhaps never arrive. —

In the reign of queen Elizabeth of great and immortal memory; every ſtranger on entering any port of this kingdom was taken before a public notary, and obliged to give in his name, quality, buſineſs, propoſed time of reſidence, and place of abode; this was regularly tranſmitted to the ſecretaries of ſtate, and by them

to the peace officers, in the quarter of the town where ſtrangers propoſed to reſide, or if in the country, to the juſtices of the reſpective counties, — by this means if they aſſumed titles different from what they gave in at landing, followed occupations contrary to them, or reſided a conſiderable time longer than they at firſt propoſed, a door was opened to the vigilance of government, to watch all their motions. — By this prudent meaſure, our commerce was improved, — at that time in its infancy — and all her expeditions, embaſſies, treaties, and negotiations, for that end, were kept from the prying eyes of ſtrangers. — If a number of foreign agents, and ſecret ſpies, had reſided in England at that time, unknown and unnoticed, in the aſſumed characters of tradeſmen, valets, ſecretaries and clerks — the other commercial ſtates of Europe would ſoon have been informed of the vigorous meaſures ſhe was taking at home and abroad, for rendering her kingdom, a formidable maritime, commercial ſtate, — and their commercial intereſts combined with their national jealouſy, would have engaged them to obſtruct or prevent, her extenſive operations in favour of trade and navigation. —

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No ſolid reaſon can be given why this meaſure ſhould not now be revived, for if we are ever ſo jealous of our own liberty, the moſt unguarded enjoyment of it, need not be extended to every ſtranger, who enters this country without character, recommendation or profeſſed buſineſs.—Nor can thoſe be offended at it, who are of the higheſt rank, ſince they are obliged to ſubmit to it, in all other countries. But the difficulty is, to perſuade my countrymen, that any reſtraint laid on them at quitting the kingdom, or on returning to it, will not be a mark of ſlavery,—yet unleſs this can be accompliſhed, our deſirable, important regulation cannot poſſibly take place—I ſuppoſe then, a man of character deſirous of quitting his native country for a ſhort time, on buſineſs or pleaſure—what impediment can it be to his voyage, if he is obliged to give in his name, place of abode, and rank in life to the officer appointed to clear his baggage at any of the out ports from whence he embarks—under a ſevere penalty for giving a wrong account of himſelf,—as to the port of London from which veſſels depart almoſt daily for the coaſts of

Flanders, France, and Holland; I would humbly propoſe the ſame regulation — that every perſon departing this kingdom be obliged to give in his name, place of abode, with the requiſite additional deſcriptions, and the time he intends to be abſent, I cannot poſſibly conceive the leaſt inconvenience from this meaſure to any man of reputation, ſince the ceremonial would be attended with little more trouble than the ſending to take places for a ſtage coach — two clerks at the moſt, in ſome office ſet apart for the purpoſe at the cuſtom houſe, would be ſufficient to make the entries; and to deliver the paſſes for paſſengers, conformably to their deſcriptions, to the maſters of veſſels, who ſhould be ſubjected to a penalty for taking paſſengers on board without them. — To the ſharper, the wandering ſpendthrift, the perfidious huſband or wife, the fraudulent inſolvent, the forger of bills, bonds, and acceptances of bills of exchange; to the private robber; and ſometimes to the foul murderer — this would prove a galling fetter — but to the honeſt, the virtuous and the brave, though unfortunate, it might give time for cool reflection, engage

them

them to make the beſt of their affairs at home, and prevent in ſome meaſure, the low contraband trade carried on from the Flanders coaſt to this country, which is generally undertaken by theſe fugitives.

THERE is another duty, my countrymen, which you owe to the commercial intereſts of your country which is, to procure an act of parliament to puniſh at leaſt with tranſportation for life, the man who dares counterfeit another's mark, or export any goods with any deceptionary marks, ſerving to denote a ſuperior fabric or quality, and impoſing by this means, an inferior — believe me this has done more harm to your manufactures in foreign countries, than the enhanced price ariſing from the dearneſs of proviſions and the price of labour, about which much noiſe and clamour is raiſed, yet no man has yet ſtated any account of the decline of our trade, except with the colonies, occaſioned by our unhappy diſputes with our fellow ſubjects. — A matter which I intended to have taken up, but as it is depending before parliament, decency forbids my intermedling in ſo ſerious a conteſt,

a conteſt, which ſeems to me to be like a quarrel among the different branches of the ſame family, which while it laſts, involves the whole in confuſion; and proves detrimental to the common intereſt.

SURELY it muſt be idle for men to talk of a regard for their country, who for the ſake of a little paltry profit, will fabricate goods inferior to the ſtandard of goodneſs, for which they receive a value, and then ſtamp ſuch a mark upon them as deceives the unwary purchaſer — theſe frauds thoroughly detected and expoſed — truſt me your manufactures will be in as great eſteem as ever, eſpecially the woollen; and that they are plentifully demanded — *the author of the preſent ſtate of the nation*, gives you a convincing proof, by ſtating the very large amount of the exports to Germany and Holland, even now there is no army on the continent, yet he ſays you have a declining trade, but he only aſſerts it, while in other points he is curious, entertaining and inſtructive by his exact arithmetical calculations and accounts — ſome complaints I have alſo heard abroad of

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bad meaſure in bale goods received upon the faith of the invoice; and the affixed uſual length of the pieces — for ſhame, my countrymen! apply to parliament, do yourſelves juſtice and retrieve the commercial honour of your country in theſe particulars — loaded as your manufactures are by the unavoidable taxes which our expenſive wars, and wild expeditions in thoſe wars; have brought upon you, do not add to them any longer this preſſing weight — the tenderneſs of government will not admit of any reſtraint whatever on your trade, ſenſible as adminiſtration muſt be of the advanced price, ariſing from the burden already mentioned; but do you exert yourſelves; generouſly animated by public virtue and a concern to ſupport the honour of trade, — detect, expoſe and procure a puniſhment adequate to all fraudulent practices, which are ſubverſive of the commercial intereſts of the nation, as well in its inland, as in its foreign trade — and depend upon it, you will find that your taxes do not bear ſo hard upon you, as the factious and diſcontented would make us believe— Nay I am certain that could

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I raiſe a ſpirit of real patriotic virtue in you, and of firm, permanent atachment to our government, which is the very beſt in the world, you would candidly own, that what you now pay to the ſtate you can very well ſupport, though you wiſh it were leſs — but leſt my attempt to inſpire this ſentiment univerſally ſhould fail, I muſt preſently take the liberty to ſhew "the real ſtate of the nation" and endeavour to convince the impartial, that foreign commerce has not ſuffered by any of the public taxes; and that the pertended injury the inland trade has ſuffered, is almoſt as ill founded.—

But before I enter on this ſubject I muſt juſt remind you of the ſtate of religious liberty in this country. — We ſeem to have fled from one extreme to another, from the ſpirit of popiſh intolerance; to that of unbounded licentiouſneſs in matters of faith and practice — as we have ſlackened the obligations of the laws of public virtue with reſpect to civil government, under the pretence of enjoying a freedom inconſiſtent with the rules of our conſtitution;

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ſo have many of us diſbanded all the ties moral and ſpiritual, which held us bound to perform ſome acts of public devotion at ſtated times, for a good example unto others; and as a teſt of the profeſſion to which we belong — a total abſence from all places of religious worſhip is openly avowed by ſome, while on the other hand, at a time, when the veil of ſuperſtition is falling off in the countries moſt devoted to blind bigotry — thouſands and ten thouſands of my countrymen, are following a new deluſion; and it ſeems as if the general expulſion of the Jeſuits, who amaſſed ſuch immenſe riches in popiſh countries, was to be the æra for diſtinguiſhing the retrograde progreſſion of Engliſhmen, who are now covering themſelves, in this enlightened age, with a thicker veil of enthuſiaſm and religious hypocriſy, than was ever worn in the darkeſt ages of unenlightened reaſon. — This error might have paſſed unnoticed in this place, if its influence on the people by leading them into ſuperfluous expences which they cannot afford, had not made it an object of our attention.

But when we are told by men who write by rule, with the views, intereſts, and deſigns of foreign courts before them; and with the cuſtom houſe and treaſury accounts caſt up to their hands— "that we are an impoveriſhed people! "tottering on the brink of univerſal bank- "ruptcy," it is time to look about us; and not only *to bring every gleaning of revenue to account*, but to extend the plan of Sully, referred to by the ingenious author *of the preſent ſtate of the nation*, at the cloſe of his work; and ſince we find "a ſimilarity of circumſtances," with reſpect to the people, though we cannot allow it with reſpect to the prince — "to reprove the "people, not the prince" — "for the ſmalleſt "needleſs expences" — eſpecially, when it makes them feel the heavier, and bear with leſs patience, the neceſſary taxes laid on them by the ſtate.

Far from us be the ſpirit of intolerance; but if religious liberty is taken in ſo large a ſenſe, as to oblige us to tolerate every frantic, mad, devotional ſyſtem, let us not permit it to become a real nuiſance to the ſtate, without

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uſing all laudable endeavours to check the growing evil; and eſpecially, let the clergy of our eſtabliſhed churches exert themſelves to engage people of rank and faſhion to countenance the religion of their country, by giving their perſonal attendance at their pariſh churches — ſince the common rant of the enthuſiaſtic rhapſodies, for I will not call them ſermons, delivered from the pulpits of the methodiſts generally turns upon the total diſregard of all religion ſhewn by the people of quality; and from this they draw ſcripture inferences ſuch as — *not many mighty, not many great are choſen, &c,* which induces the commonalty to believe — they are the only ſaints on earth; and thus they gain contributions, which are almoſt incredible —The Jeſuits ſet up their religious trade with much leſs — on you my reverend brethren, the parochial clergy of this great kingdom, I reſpectfully call — and I beſeech you, to exert yourſelves for the intereſt of your country — conſider what a ſhame it is, that thouſands and ten thouſands of the people committed to your ſpiritual care, ſhould deem you inſufficient for the promotion of their ſalvation—In many pariſhes of

this metropolis, there are no leſs than four or five ſhepherds, in ſome meaſure connected with one flock.—Let holy zeal animate you, to uſe every means in your power, to keep them within your own folds — the ſheep ſeldom ſtray, when the ſhepherd is active and vigilant — the vineyard is fruitful — when the labourers are found in it, early and late — will it not be an indelible reproach to you, if your poor deluded wanderers are brought home to you, by the labours of the ſtage; and finally will it not induce men to believe, that you are tired of the mortifying duties of your office, and that ſince the fees muſt be paid, you are little ſollicitous who chriſtens, who viſits the ſick, or who buries — but do you conſider my reverend brethren, that "a people "burthened with taxes, diſheartened by a de- "clining trade; and lately murmuring in our "ſtreets at the high price of proviſions," — pay double fees for all the duties juſt recited; — do you alſo reflect, that if the price of proviſions and the weight of public taxes bear hard upon the produce of the labour of the people, theſe private contributions, the amount of which can not yet be known, unneceſſarily and impoliticly

increaſe

increaſe the burthen. — Permit me then to ſollicit you, as the firſt means of reclaiming the people from their wanderings; to obtain leave from your ſuperiors, to change the method of ſinging in your ſeveral congregations; for the wretched pſalmody of our churches, has diſguſted and driven away thouſands, who have been enticed to the methodiſts congregations by the lure of their harmonious ſinging; and their total perverſion has ſucceeded. —

TIME will not admit of my drawing out an exact computation of the total amount of the contributions, for the ſupport of their aſſemblies throughout the kingdom; if this little work lives to a ſecond edition, it ſhall then be publiſhed — ſome part of them however, we ſhall carry to account preſently, in ſtating the weekly expences of the common people.—In the mean time — " to wind up the alarm to our clergy " to the higheſt pitch;" permit me to aſſure them — that it amounts to more than double the ſums that are drawn from the poor labouring people in popiſh countries, for the ſupport of two or three orders of mendicant friars and

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nums in each capital town — In a word my reverend brethren, you have inconſiderately let their teachers into your churches; and if you are not more vigilant, they will very deliberately let you out of them, or at leaſt ſtrip you of your revenues, for it will be impoſſible to pay the fees of ſo many ſpiritual phyſicians, ſhould this religious fever laſt long and become general. —

And here again I muſt inſiſt upon it, that you my countrymen and fellow ſubjects! are the cauſe of moſt of the hardſhips you have complained of ſince the peace, for you have gone on increaſing your expences, at the very periods when you declared that the means of ſubſiſtence failed; and you now ſee that I have detected numbers of you in very needleſs diſburſements, ariſing from your falſe notions of religious liberty, — a liberty of going to ſome extra religious aſſembly, and of paying a part of the produce of your daily labour, for the ſupport of an enthuſiaſtic hypocrite, without being able to aſſign any one ſenſible motive for this conduct. —

It would be endleſs to enumerate the many evils this kingdom labours under, from falſe conceptions of the nature of civil and religious liberty — thoſe I have pointed out may be ſufficient, to evince the neceſſity of a general public adherence to the laws of virtue in the people, if they mean to correct and amend the ſtate. — I hope no invidious inference will be drawn from what has been advanced, that the author is an enemy to true liberty in its utmoſt latitude, for which he and his children would boldly meet your enemy in the gate, be he foreign or domeſtic, and die in the defence of your juſt rights and privileges — but he confeſſes at the ſame time, that he does not ſee them ſo much endangered, or your public credit, trade and finances in ſuch a deplorable condition, as to excite the well grounded apprehenſions of any honeſt, loyal, good ſubject throughout the kingdom. — The alarm however, with reſpect to the dangerous ſituation of public credit, having been given from a formidable quarter, by perſons ſuppoſed to be maſters of the ſubject — accept me as an humble volunteer in your ſervice; and mine ſhall be

be the pleaſing taſk to remove all your fears on that head,—with diffidence my ſentiments ſhall be offered, but as the intention is laudable, I ſhall hope, at leaſt, after an attentive peruſal—an impartial criticiſm.

Of the preſent State of public Credit in England, proving, that if the People are virtuous, ſober, frugal and induſtrious, it can never be carried to its utmoſt Extent—and that the national Debt, conſidering the increaſe of our Maritime and Commercial Strength, is not at this time a national grievance.

THE ſtability of public credit, depends ſo much on the flouriſhing ſtate of commerce, that it will be neceſſary to remove the groundleſs alarms which have been lately raiſed in the minds of my countrymen, with reſpect to the decline of foreign commerce and inland trade; and as every diſeaſe is known by its ſymptoms, give me leave to point them out in the words of one of the greateſt writers of the laſt century, on trade and finances.—"There will

"be

" be here and there marks of ſplendor among
" the better ſort — but an univerſal face of po-
" verty upon the common people — the in-
" tereſt of money will be dear; and the pur-
" chaſe of land cheap—the prices of proviſions
" and of labour will be low — rents will every
" where fall — lands will lie uncultivated; and
" farm houſes will go to ruin — the yearly
" marriages and births will leſſen; and the
" burials increaſe—the ſtock of live cattle muſt
" apparently diminiſh; and laſtly, the inhabi-
" tants will by degrees, in ſome meaſure, with-
" draw themſelves from ſuch a declining coun-
" try — another writer on trade no leſs reſpect-
able than the former — aſſures us, " that it
" cannot be ill with trade but land will fall,
" nor ill with lands, but trade will feel it; and
" that generally, wherever proviſions are for a
" continuance of years dear in any country, the
" people are rich, and where they are moſt
" cheap throughout the world, for the moſt
" part the people are very poor," — in another
place he adds, " that high wages are a certain
" token of the riches of a nation," — theſe ge-
neral poſitions without entering into details

which the limits of our plan will not admit of plainly prove, that the author of *the preſent ſtate of the nation, with reſpect to its trade and finances*, — either never read theſe celebrated writers, who preſerve the higheſt degree of eſteem to this hour in the literary world — or that he is egregiouſly miſtaken in aſſerting "that we are "an impoveriſhed people, with a declining "trade."—Will he offer to tell us, that marks of ſplendor are to be diſcovered here and there, only among the better ſort of people—the very contrary is obvious; and univerſal luxury the natural effect of opulence, ariſing from an improved extenſive commerce, in its ſuitable degrees of gradation runs through all the ranks of life, a luxury in dreſs, in furniture, in diet, in equipages, and in expenſive amuſements pervades the whole maſs of people, and ſeems even to require ſome wholeſome ſumptuary laws to confine it within proper limits. — The great and highly exalted, before they take pen in hand, ſhould employ ſome perſons of capacity in the private walk of life, to inſpect the preſent manners of the nation, and to bring them an accurate ſtate of things, as they are to be found in the

the families of the inhabitants, not as they may appear upon ſpeculative deductions from the weight of our national debts and taxes — let them ſend their ſecretaries or gentlemen to paſs a week with the citizens, the common ſhop-keepers, and the mechanics of this city — let them eat, drink, ſleep, ride out and partake of the amuſements of theſe people; and they will find a certain eaſe, and even elegance throughout the whole, unknown to citizens of a much ſuperior rank in other commercial countries — then let them carefully view all our ſhops, and obſerve if upon the whole, there appears to be any ſtagnation of the inland trade, even the gaming table of the ſtate, at which the people have played at an increaſed expence for theſe two laſt years, is ſurrounded every night — each ſtate lottery-office is as full as it can hold — let them examine the dreſſes and diſtinguiſh the characters of the motley votaries at the ſhrine of fortune — from the bold adventurer, who dedicates his ſixteen guineas, — to the humble petitioner, whoſe prayer to the fickle goddeſs is but feebly promoted by the ſimple offering of a quarter guinea — then let them tell me, if all

ranks of life are not included in this groupe, we will next conduct them to the public theatres, there they will find the firſt gallery crouded every night with livery ſervants, and chamber-maids, the former occupiers of the ſecond — and the pit filled with the characters that were formerly content in the firſt gallery, — but we muſt not ſtop here, our public tea-drinking rooms in all the environs of the metropolis; and even the ſkittle-grounds in the neighbourhood of the induſtrious manufacturing quarters muſt be viſited on Sundays, and even on many of the week-days — I am aware that when ſuch an inſpection is taken and carried to the *author or authors of the preſent ſtate of the nation* — they will immediate anſwer, that it confirms their obſervation, but I abſolutely deny it, luxury and poverty never ſubſiſted together, the latter, may in proceſs of time, be the effect of the former, though not till luxury exceeds the proportion of the relative riches of the nation, acquired by its extenſive commerce — again it will be remarked, that our priſons are full of debtors, and bankruptcies increaſe, — the latter may be one effect of our increaſed commerce — if the troubles

bles in America ſuſpend remittances for a time, as punctuality in payment is the ſoul of commercial credit, this may produce bankruptcies, but will any man infer from this or any other adventitious circumſtance, that we have a declining trade — as to the petty debtors, much I am afraid their misfortune ariſes more from living beyond their ſtation, from the great and the privileged running ſhamefully in arrear; and from the facility of eſcape afforded to conſiderable traders, who fly their country indebted to theſe poor people, than to the oppreſſive weight of our taxes, the dearneſs of proviſions, or the decline of trade — If we look into the country, we ſhall find the face of chearfulneſs and plenty, nay even riches in the hands of the farmers, a diminution of our people indeed ſeems to menace us, which has been accounted for in another place, and perhaps one immediate remedy to this evil might be, the repeal or amendment of the marriage-act — in ſome ſtates — the hinderance of marriage by any means direct or indirect, is puniſhed in private perſons with excommunication, and in almoſt all but our's, the children before marriage are made legitimate by the marriage

of

of the mother — how many loſt infants, how many wretched mothers might have been ſaved to the nation, had this been the caſe with us; and ſurely to prevent unnatural murders, is an object of the higheſt conſequence to a civilized people. — As to the ſhopkeepers in country towns, I am credibly informed by the wholeſale dealers in London who ſupply them, that the orders they ſend are as frequent, as valuable, and their remittances as punctual at preſent, as they have been for ſome years paſt — well but our manufactures, they are declining! — what, when navigable canals are making to promote inland communications, and when every encouragement is given to the uſeful arts by bounties and premiums — impoſſible! — but the poor, working manufacturer ſuffers! I deny it, wages have been increaſed in every branch proportionably to the advanced price of proviſions, and the produce of their labour has been enhanced to the conſumer, to indemnify the maſter — an eſtimate of any man's dreſs from head to foot, or of his furniture now, compared with what it coſt him ten years ſince, will evince this truth — we have not yet been able then, to trace the decline of our inland trade, and with reſpect

ſpect to our foreign commerce, I will venture to ſay, that our manufactures, the ſtaple manufactures of this country are as much called for as ever; and as much eſteemed in countries where they have not ſet up ſimilar manufactories of their own, which every nation has a right to do, derived from the law of nations, and the firſt principles of civil ſociety — In many, particularly in Holland, Germany, and Flanders, the very name of Engliſh, is ſufficient to enhance the value of all hard ware; and woollen manufactures, and the product of other countries is often thus impoſed on the ignorant, my evidences of this fact are innumerable, nor can I believe it has eſcaped the notice of any ſenſible traveller, who has viſited the ſhops and fairs of thoſe countries — but what is ſtill more in our favour, notwithſtanding all the clamour that has been made about the heavy clog laid on our manufactures by the taxes — they are ſtill cheaper than thoſe of France; if their intrinſic value be impartially attended to — I have made the experiment and found it ſo, with reſpect to the articles juſt mentioned, and ſeveral others; the durableneſs of Engliſh woollen

cloths,

cloths, ſtuffs of various denominations, hard ware, Britiſh wrought ſilks, &c. ballances the difference in the firſt coſt — an eſtabliſhed houſehold, a numerous family, and ſeveral years reſidence on the continent, joined to the repeated ſollicitations of my foreign friends, to procure them theſe commodities directly from England, enables me firmly to eſtabliſh this truth.

Our trade with Portugal however, is ſaid to be on the decline, it may be ſo, we cannot engroſs the commerce of the whole world; but we can be very inconſiſtent, for we can view with magnifying eyes the amount of our national debts and taxes; but we cannot enviſage the cauſe of the greateſt part of them,—expenſive wars, for the preſervation and extenſion of our commerce in different parts of the world; in a word, if we were true to our own intereſts, and warmly attached to government and to our excellent conſtitution we ſhould fairly own, that we have as much foreign and domeſtic commerce, as we know how to manage to advantage, and that by conforming a little more to the principles of public virtue — and laying a

few

few reſtraints on ourſelves, which our rulers cannot impoſe, conſiſtent with your enlarged ideas of civil liberty — you are very well able to bear the preſent public taxes, which have been attended with a proportioned increment of foreign commerce, and of domeſtic employment — at advanced wages.

I CANNOT quit this part of my diſpute with the authors of *the preſent ſtate of the nation* without mentioning, that ſo melancholy a ſubject as a declining trade, ſhould have been ſupported by proofs, and not reſted on bare aſſertions—the documents, if the fact be true, muſt be in their hands — for if they could ſo accurately ſtate the important ballances of trade in our favour, on our exports to Holland and Germany, which alone are ſufficient, to give us room to imagine our commerce is increaſed to theſe countries, why did not they give us alſo the amount of the exports to the ſame countries for ten years farther back, to prove that we have a declining trade — I am apt to think the reaſon was, that the ballances would have appeared to be much leſs; and conſequently our commerce to this

part of the world would have been found conſiderably increaſed. —

With reſpect to our commercial credit it is ſufficient to obſerve, that all orders given by Britiſh merchants, are executed with alacrity in all quarters of the globe, that bills of exchange on England are univerſally received and diſcounted at the common courſe of exchange, and that no recommendations abroad are more honoured or reſpected, than thoſe given by Britiſh merchants. A little internal reformation in the body of the people ſeems therefore to be all, that is wanting, to ſecure the flouriſhing ſtate of our commerce and inland trade, a little more induſtry, and leſs private expence, a generous conteſt to promote univerſal harmony, an indulgent candour in the judgements you form of the adminiſtrators of our public affairs; and above all an ardent, ſteady, affectionate loyalty to a pious and clement Prince, who ſets before your eyes a bright example of public and private virtue.

On the proſperity of commerce depends that of our national credit, with reſpect to our pub-

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lic funds—and, gracious heaven! is it poſſible that true born Engliſhmen can regard the ſtate of public credit with a dejected and deſpending countenance! can the true patriot be alarmed for his property in the funds, and ſtand appalled at every idle paper phantom, that ſtarts forth from the preſs, and ſilently but intrepidly declares — "the national credit totters — it has "been extended beyond its proper limits — "there is danger of a general bankruptcy — a "probability that the ballance of our trade, "from its declining ſituation, will not be ſuf- "ficient to pay the annual intereſt to foreigners, "for the property they have in our funds — "we are unable under theſe circumſtances "to go to war" — with twenty ſuch vague notions, all equally ill-grounded, but which, admitting they were in ſome meaſure true — you, my fellow citizens and countrymen! have it in your power, to render of little or no conſequence — of this I ſhall ſoon convince you — At preſent, permit me to exult, not to weep, over the national debt; and to pronounce it, a laſting monument to lateſt poſterity, of the glory of Great-Britain — a trophy of renown ſur-

paſſing all the laurels of ambitious tyrants, the falſely admired heroes of their age — an indelible record of the public good faith of the three eſtates of this ancient realm, in their political capacity; and of the integrity, induſtry and commercial ſpirit of the inhabitants of this little iſland — by which they were enabled to contract ſo large a debt, not ſolely of each other, but of the ſubjects of all the neighbouring ſtates of Europe — and to carry on an extenſive war for the defence and ſupport of their commercial rights—beſides remitting large ſubſidies to their allies, and on the baſis of public credit—unprovided with mines of ſilver and gold—deſtitute of amaſſed treaſures, the uſual reſources of ancient and modern ſtates—yet leaving untouched the perſonal effects of her ſubjects, while the ſilver plate of the French was melted down to ſupply the exigences of that powerful adverſary — already indebted on the ſame public faith to foreigners, as well as to her own people, near half a century — yet ſtill augmenting it — out-living the prophecies of the death of her public credit, foretold many years ſince by our ableſt writers — after having humbled to the duſt "the two

united

united branches of the houſe of Bourbon"— to terminate the war againſt them, on conditions highly beneficial to her commercial intereſts, though not quite equal to the ſanguine expectations of a victorious people.

In order to prove that our unlimited public credit is a moſt aſtoniſhing acquiſition to this nation, we muſt look back to the origin of our funding ſyſtem— perennial ways and means might have been adequate to the expences immediately incurred by the revolution; but ſoon after that period, our extenſive political connections for the ſupport of our own freedom and independence as a nation, and for preſerving the civil and religious liberties of our allies againſt the ambitious deſigns of France, rendered it impoſſible to raiſe the large, but neceſſary ſupplies for theſe valuable purpoſes, by any perennial means, certain taxes were therefore laid, and money borrowed on the credit of them upon various conditions which it would be tedious to enumerate — the exigencies of the ſtate increaſing, it became impracticable to pay off theſe loans, ſo that a national debt was eſtabliſhed of near ſeven millions

millions ſterling at the end of the reign of K. William III. and the taxes which were at firſt intended as a temporary aid, became perpetual; being engaged for the payment of annual rates of intereſt, on principal ſums borrowed, which there appeared not the leaſt proſpect of diſcharging. — This debt therefore entailed on the next generation, and from them handed down to us, may properly be ſtyled, the baſis of our national debts, and of our preſent public credit; for the ſame ſyſtem of funding has continued, the ſame method of borrowing on the credit of new taxes, and, conſequently, the produce of theſe taxes ſtands engaged for the payment of the annual intereſt of the money borrowed on them; and therefore it is ſuppoſed cannot be taken off till the principal ſums borrowed on them reſpectively, are paid off. —Our inquiry therefore muſt be, into the merits or demerits of this ſyſtem of funding from its commencement; and I am ſorry to ſay, we have but very few able guides in this taſk, the ſtudy of finances having been greatly neglected during a period of fourſcore years, when conſummate ſkill in that ſcience has been moſt wanted.

THE only reſpectable adverſary I have to engage, in my defence of the neceſſity, expedience and advantage of the funding ſyſtem, in the preſent ſituation of our public affairs, and indeed reſpecting the ſituation they have been in from the time of Queen Anne happens to be — the moſt accurate hiſtorian, the moſt candid, polite writer, and one of the beſt men in private life, that this, or any other nation has produced; ſo univerſally eſteemed are his writings, and ſo venerated is his amiable character, that it is with equal diffidence and reluctance I undertake to controvert his ſentiments on public credit, yet I flatter myſelf with ſucceſs, and if I happily meet with the approbation of my countrymen, I am ſure even of his applauſe—for his country's welfare abſorbs in him, every private conſideration — I cannot do him juſtice but by giving the ſubſtance of his arguments in his own elegant ſtyle. —

" IT appears to have been the common prac-
" tice of antiquity to make proviſion in time of
" peace, for the neceſſities of war, and to hoard
" up treaſures, beforehand, as the inſtruments

" either

" either of conqueſt or defence, without truſt-
" ing to extraordinary impoſts, much leſs to
" borrowing in times of diſorder and confuſion"
— in his uſual accurate manner he then gives a variety of inſtances of this conduct from profane and ſacred hiſtory, and then proceeds —
" On the contrary our modern expedient, which
" has become very general, is, to mortgage the
" public revenues, and to truſt that poſterity,
" during peace, will pay off the incumbrances
" contracted during the preceding war — and
" they, having before their eyes, ſo good an
" example of their wiſe fathers, have the ſame
" prudent reliance on their poſterity, who at
" laſt from neceſſity, more than choice, are ob-
" liged to place the ſame confidence in a new
" poſterity," in anſwer to this firſt outline of the inconveniences attending public debts entailed on generations yet unborn, I muſt beg leave to obſerve that I do not mean to eſtabliſh, that they are the moſt eligible methods of providing for the neceſſities of war, but I intend to prove that, long before this author wrote, I believe, before he was born, we had no choice left, we were already indebted; and

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had not been able to amaſs the treaſures of ATHENS or of the PTOLOMIES, nor yet had we the mines of Mexico and Peru to ſupply us, and therefore, he ſhould have lived in an age when the public coffers were full, when money regorged from the profits of commerce or conqueſt; and when there was a poſſibility in this nation, during any given time of peace, to provide for the neceſſities of a ſucceeding war, by any other means than mortgaging the public revenues,—to have rendered the preference he gives to the ancient method of furniſhing the ſupplies, practicable — that it has not been ſo for above a century, the annals of the nation with reſpect to its finances, will plainly diſcover, on an impartial review. — "He next examines the conſe-
" quences of public debts, both in our dome-
" ſtic management by their influence on com-
" merce and induſtry; and in our foreign
" tranſactions, by their effect on wars and ne-
" gociations. — Public ſecurities are with us
" become a kind of money, and paſs as readi-
" ly at the current price, as gold or ſilver —
" wherever any profitable undertaking offers
" itſelf, however expenſive, there are never

" wanting hands enough to embrace it; nor " needs a trader, who has ſums in the public " ſtocks, fear to launch out into the moſt ex- " tenſive trade, ſince he is poſſeſſed of funds " which will anſwer the moſt ſudden demands " that can be made on him. In ſhort, our na- " tional debts furniſh our merchants with a " ſpecies of money, that is continually multi- " plying in their hands; and produces ſure gain, " beſide the profits of their commerce — this " muſt enable them to trade upon leſs profit — " the ſmall profit of the merchant renders the " commodity cheaper, cauſes a greater con- " ſumption, quickens the labour of the com- " mon people, and helps to ſpread arts and " induſtry through the whole ſociety." He then mentions another favourable circumſtance, but unluckily adds, " that perhaps they are of " no great importance:" the laſt is not indeed of much, wherefore I omit it. — But is it poſſible to urge any thing ſtronger in favour of our funds and in ſupport of public credit, than what I have juſt quoted from this great autho- rity — againſt this, however " he deſires you " will weigh the many diſadvantages which

" attend

" attend our public debts in the whole interior " œconomy of the ſtate." His firſt obſervation on this head, turns on the confluence of people and riches to the capital, on account of our public funds, this is certainly an inconvenience, as it tends to depopulate the provinces; and to engage people to employ their time and money in the traffic of the funds, inſtead of reſiding in the counties where they were brought up, and applying themſelves to trade and manufactures—but we muſt prove that trade and manufactures want directors or maſters, with capitals to carry them on, in the ſeveral counties of this kingdom, or there will not be any force in this argument.—But ſecondly, " they baniſh gold and ſilver from the moſt " conſiderable commerce of the ſtate," how ſo! remittances to foreign counties are not made in the paper credit of the funds, but in bills of exchange, an ancient practice; nor are inland demands paid by transfer of ſtock.—Supppoſe, however, that they were, I am ſure, if practicable, it would be highly advantageous to the nation, for gold and ſilver coin is a very expenſive commodity, of which, we want no

more than will ſuffice for common circulation in ſuch ſmall ſums, as we cannot pay in current paper " whatever is eſtabliſhed by the authority of " any nation, to be the medium of their mutual " exchanges with each other in the courſe of " traffic, is properly the money of a nation — " it may therefore conſiſt of gold, ſilver, and " copper coin, or of paper, as bank notes, " bills of exchange, promiſſory notes or bonds, " nay even of transfers of funds, provided " when the poſſeſſor quits that nation he can " change them without loſs, for ſpecie current " in the part of the world whither he is going, " or for bills of exchange payable in that coun- " try." — How neceſſary then it is on this principle, to ſupport the preſent extenſive public credit and paper money of Great Britain. — I hope not only to ſupport it, but to point out the means of enlarging it. Thirdly, the taxes " which are levied to pay the intereſt of " theſe debts, are a check upon induſtry, " heighten the price of labour, and are an " oppreſſion on the poorer ſort," — not at all, if wages are advanced, in proportion to the price of proviſions; and if this advance on

the

the produce of the labour of the people, does not diminiſh the ſale of our manufactures in foreign countries, and no man has yet proved that it has, the very contrary we have partly demonſtrated, nor can theſe taxes for the ſame reaſon be a check on induſtry, — quite the reverſe, if the poor are kept conſtantly employed at high wages, and if the home conſumers are enabled finally, from the riches they have acquired by war, conqueſt and commerce, to pay a better price for every commodity than they could afford to give before theſe taxes were impoſed—and that this is the true ſtate of the nation, no man ſurely can doubt, who conſiders the opulence, derived from our Aſiatic and other commercial connections, beſides the fortunes raiſed by the profits of the laſt war — if this opulence did not actually ſubſiſt, it would have been impoſſible to have found purchaſers of our funds, conſidering their immenſe amount, even at any price — but a people, miſtruſtful of government, will always ſtudiouſly conceal their riches—it has ever been the practice in all ages, from the firſt aſcertaining and ſecuring of private property, by the laws of civil ſociety, to this hour — and here let

me

me ſuppoſe for a moment, our national debt cancelled, our burthenſome taxes taken off, our treaſury ſtill empty, or only producing the ſtated revenues for the ordinary ſupport of government, in this caſe we muſt take it for granted the people would be rich — which way in this ſituation, ſhould we provide for a ſudden great emergency, " a rupture with the two " united branches of the houſe of Bourbon re- " preſented, as anxious for an occaſion to wreak " their vengeance on us," —a people jealous of their liberties, perhaps diffident of ſucceſſive adminiſtrations, would hardly depoſite the money that would then regorge from all parts, in the public treaſury, they would dread the miſapplication of a part at leaſt, to corrupt voters at elections, or to bribe the repreſentatives of the people, what then would be the conſequence? — I have already pointed it out — the latitude of your civil liberty permitting the emigration of your people, and the alienation of their effects,—incredulous as to the exiſtence of true patriotiſm in the government, and little ſollicitous about it in themſelves, the opulent would deſert you, or lend their money to foreign

powers

powers — your public funds, ſupported by the inviolable faith of ſucceſſive parliaments for near a century, prevents this dreadful ſituation of affairs, and inſures the patriotiſm, if not the loyalty of the monied intereſt.

THUS we have attempted to remove the only material objections to the funding ſyſtem, ſo far as it affects the interior œconomy of the kingdom — our admired author, who errs ſo ſeldom, that he is the more dangerous, from the ſuppoſition men will form, that he who is generally, may be always in the right — proceeds next, to a more extenſive view of his ſubject — he aſks, "if all our preſent taxes be "mortgaged, muſt we not invent new ones? "and may not this matter be carried to a length "that is ruinous and deſtructive?" I hope not, the edition of his work, from which I draw my extracts, bears date in 1758, ſince which period, we have laid on a few very heavy taxes; and though the violent death of our public credit was foretold, yet we have ſafely conducted the veſſel, forty leagues beyond the rock, on which, all our calculators declared, ſhe would inevitably

bly ſplit; but theſe gentlemen will ſay, we have only poſtponed the evil, I humbly beg their pardon, it appears evident to me, that we have totally prevented it, and that a national bankruptcy ſo often predicted, ſo ſtrongly recommended by ſome, even by the writer we have been criticiſing, as the leſſer evil in a ſtate under heavy incumbrances; and ſo dreaded by all at this time, will never happen, — to avoid it however, there muſt be virtue and public ſpirit in the people, to ſupport and even extend public credit — before I lead the way to this grand object, it will be neceſſary for me further to demonſtrate to you, the very great importance of your national credit, what I have hitherto advanced on that head reſts on my own opinion, to this we will now ſubjoin the ſentiments of another juſtly celebrated, living author — "Public "credit he defines to be, the confidence repoſed "in a ſtate or body politic, borrowing money "on condition *that the capital ſhould not be de-* "*mandable*, but that a certain proportional part "of the ſum ſhall be annually paid, either in "lieu of intereſt, or in extinction of part of the "capital, in this definition there is an alterna-

"tive,

" tive, of paying a perpetual intereſt for the " money borrowed, or of paying annually a " ſum exceeding the intereſt, which exceſs is " intended to extinguiſh the capital in a certain " number of years: in both caſes, the annual " payment is called *an annuity*: when it is ex- " actly equal to the intereſt agreed on, it is " called perpetual, and determinate when it ex- " ceeds it, and is granted for life, or a number " of years". — Let me intreat you to bear conſtantly in mind the grand condition, with reſpect to our preſent national debt, compriſed in this definition. — The capital or principal advanced is not demandable, — for of this we ſhall make ſuch a ſingular uſe, as will ſurpriſe all our predeceſſors, whether writers on, or managers of the public revenues.—

" In giving an account of the riſe and pro- " greſs of public credit, this author, like the " preceding, informs you, that in ancient times " princes amaſſed treaſures to carry on their " wars; and afterwards, when theſe failed " them, they mortgaged their lands and prin- " cipalities, acting upon the principles of pri-

" vate credit: — the next ſtep was to raiſe mo-
" ney upon a branch of taxes, aſſigned to the
" lender for the re-imburſement of his capital
" and intereſt; — this plan of adminiſtration was
" attended with ſo much abuſe and oppreſſion,
" that ſtateſmen began to deſpair of carrying
" on public affairs by ſuch expedients: — to this
" therefore ſucceeded, the method of raiſing
" money within the year, or upon what they
" called ſhort funds; and at length public cre-
" dit aſſumed its preſent form." — The reaſon was, the ſums wanted were too large to be raiſed within the year, or by ſhort funds, and this was owing to the enlarging of our political connections, for the ſecurity and extenſion of our commerce. — " Money was borrowed on deter-
" minate, or perpetual annuities, funds were
" provided for that purpoſe; and the refund-
" ing of the capital was left in the option of
" government; but was never to be demand-
" able." — Our author puts a queſtion founded on the preſent ſituation of the national debt, which deſerves notice in this place, being exactly ſimilar to the ſuppoſition I have ſtated in the foregoing pages—" Were the *undemandable* ca-

" pital

" pital of 140 millions ſterling, thrown by Great
" Britain in a few years, into the hands of the
" preſent creditors; and were France to do
" the ſame, with her creditors, what trade
" could abſorb it? Capitals now are only of
" value, in proportion to the intereſts they bring:
" — The refunding of capitals makes money
" regorge to ſuch a degree, that they will fetch
" little or no intereſt, in France, *anno* 1720, it
" reduced intereſt to 2 *per cent.* — in another
" place, he tells us, the ſpirit of the nation is
" totally bent upon the ſupport of public credit,
" on which their commercial intereſt wholly
" depends;" — and he gives you a very bright
proſpect of the conſequence, " that the ſame cauſes
" which have raiſed the credit of this nation to
" ſuch an amazing height" — the principal of
which is, the inviolable faith of our parliaments
in the proviſion made for the punctual payment
not of the *principal*, but of the *annual intereſt* — "
" will either force the French from their old prin-
" ciples" — of delaying or refuſing to pay the
ſtipulated intereſt of her debts, and making oc-
caſional public bankruptcies, — " or they will
" ſome time or other bury her credit in the

" duſt:"—but let us attend to the other effect of our great public credit: " we have now " merchants of extenſive credit, and fair cha- " racter who ſerve as interpoſed perſons for the " whole monied intereſt of Europe, and who " can fill a ſubſcription for millions with a ſin- " gle name;— and as to taxes, where they are " rightly eſtabliſhed" as they are in England, and not farmed out as in France, " the people " have a certain method to indemnify them- " ſelves," — they raiſe it on the conſumer, ſo that if he be a ſtockholder, he in ſome meaſure pays his own intereſt. — " Loans are filled by " money ſtagnating, which the owner deſires to " realize; if he cannot do better, he lends it to " government: if he can do better, he will not " lend it, at home; and what will be the con- " ſequence?—He will ſend it abroad, in ſearch of " high intereſt:— the effect of public borrow- " ing or national debts is, to augment the per- " manent income of the country, out of ſtag- " nating money and ballances of trade;— this " income ſo created, may be either the property " of natives, or foreigners, if the latter, they " will be induced to ſettle in the country where

" their

" their funds ariſe;—and as Great Britain com-
" manded all the unemployed money in Europe,
" towards the cloſe of the laſt war, after France
" had failed in her payments to her creditors in
" 1759, ſhe muſt have derived a conſiderable
" advantage from the confluence of foreigners
" to her dominions, bringing with them addi-
" tional property." — But amidſt theſe advan-tages — does not commerce ſuffer from the weight of the taxes impoſed on the produce of the labour of the people?—It is impoſſible to follow this voluminous writer through all his diſſertations on trade, public credit, and coin; I can therefore only ſelect what is directly to my purpoſe. — We have enumerated, in another place, the ſymptoms of a declining trade; and I think we have found few or none of them with us—we have from him another token—"when a
" country imports any manufactures ſhe former-
" ly made at home." I apprehend we ſtand clear of this, for on the contrary we manufacture ſeveral articles we uſed formerly to import, and that ſince the burden of our national debt, and taxes has been the conſtant ſubject of com-plaint.—As public credit, therefore, does not

appear

appear to have done us any harm hitherto, but rather to have promoted foreign and domeſtic commerce, and that we are encouraged by this eminent writer, to ſupport it, and to continue borrowing—Let us ſtate his opinion with reſpect to the conſequences of increaſing our national debt, on the baſis of public credit, when extraordinary emergencies ſhall require it;—and here we muſt obſerve, that he ſuppoſes a proportional increaſe of taxes to pay the annual intereſt of future loans, which I ſhall not finally admit, as I propoſe to provide other funds for this purpoſe: but to remove all alarms which former writers, or the reſpectable author of *the preſent ſtate of The nation* may have raiſed in your minds, we will grant for a moment, this proportional increaſe of taxes, and even then it appears evident, that if our profits by war, conqueſt, or commerce, bear their proportion alſo, as they really have done to this hour, the national debt will not be *(nor is it at preſent)* a national grievance. — Indeed it ſurpſries me much, that in *The preſent ſtate of the nation*, no mention is made of our new manufactures eſtabliſhed, even during the war, and publicly known,

known, becauſe they were patronized by a public ſociety for the encouragement of arts, commerce, and manufactures: this is a want of candour I ſhould not have ſuſpected in ſuch a performance. —After removing numberleſs other objections to public debts, the writer, from whom we have ſo largely extracted, "diſproves the "vulgar notion, that by contracting debts be-"yond a certain ſum, *a trading* nation, *which* "*has great ballance in its favour* muſt be in-"volved in an unavoidable bankruptcy. — To "ſay that a nation muſt become bankrupt to "itſelf, is a propoſition", ſays he, "which im-"plies a contradiction."—

In a word, my countrymen; as I cannot find any ſymptoms of a declining trade amongſt you, nor a want of commercial credit with all parts of the globe; and as I have demonſtrated, that with a little more frugality, you would lighten the weight of your taxes, and prevent their enhancing the price of your manufactures; I muſt inſiſt on it, that your public credit, or national debt, has preſerved your independance as a ſtate, and rendered you formi-

dable

dable to your enemies, by ſupplying you readily, without delay, with the means of paying your fleets and armies, and of ſupporting your maritime force, on which your whole ſyſtem of foreign commerce depends; and I muſt intreat you to conſider the maintenance, and even the extenſion, in caſe of neceſſity, of that public credit, which has operated for you ſuch great, ſuch glorious effects; for it is the moſt important object that can engage your attention — it has been declared ſo, by the concurrent teſtimony of the beſt political writers; and it is more eminently ſo at this time, in order to provide againſt the future meaſures, "of "the two united branches of the houſe of Bour-"bon, anxious for an occaſion to retrieve their "honour, and wreak their vengeance on us." —For it requires no great political capacity to diſcover in what quarter hoſtilities will commence, when a rupture happens, which I imagine however, is ſtill at many years diſtance. —France has diſburthened herſelf of ſeveral very expenſive civil and military eſtabliſhments in America; ſhe has ſtrengthened and firmly ratified the moſt powerful alliances in Germany,

and

and ſhe has made a very conſiderable progreſs in recruiting her finances, and recovering her naval ſtrength; we may therefore be aſſured, that the next war with that power will be brought directly home to us, at leaſt the attempt will be made; it will in that caſe be a conteſt between the fleets of the two nations; and ſhould thoſe of France gain only a temporary advantage, and be enabled to land any conſiderable regular force on this iſland, it is obvious to every one, that our greateſt ſecurity will be, ſuch a ſituation of our public credit, as ſhall not only prevent foreigners and natives from drawing out their property at any price, and leaving the kingdom, but as will afford us ſuch ample ſupplies, that we may be enabled to command the aſſiſtance of all our inhabitants, as well as of the ſubjects of foreign ſtates, our allies.

It is now incumbent on me to point out the means, premiſing, that what I am to offer on this head, is ſubmitted with much humility to the conſideration of the whole nation, and a pardon is ſollicited, if I ſhall appear to have

excited curioſity, or raiſed expectations, without the means of gratification.

The National Debt no national Grievance, further ſtated — with Propoſals for improving the public Revenue, and for providing Funds in time of War, adequate to the Neceſſities of the State, without laying additional Taxes on the People.

IN our inquiry into the ſtate of public credit, and the nature of the national debt, we have found, that the greateſt part of this debt has been contracted on this expreſs condition, that the principal or capital is not *demandable* — perhaps we ſhall now diſcover that all our ſchemes and projects for paying it off; and all our clamours for leſſening it, are totally uſeleſs, and highly impolitic — but we have obſerved alſo, that what gave Great Britain the command of all the unemployed money in Europe, at a criſis when ſhe moſt wanted it, was, the punctual, regular payment of the perpetual, annual intereſt on the *undemandable principal or capital*; and that France

failing

failing in this, loſt her credit with her own ſubjects, and with foreign nations. — I venture to affirm then, that we have no buſineſs to trouble our heads about redeeming or paying off the national Debt. — Here methinks I ſee ſome able financier cloſe this little work, and paſs a ſentence of haſty condemnation on the whole; —there were ſome good things here and there; crude, indigeſted thoughts, but well meant; he appears to be honeſt — what a pity he ſhould turn out a madman! — Patience, gentlemen, I hope for the honour of your country, I am not the firſt *etourdi* to whom you have given a full hearing; let us reſume the ſubject. —

I HAVE a very ſimple propoſition humbly to offer to your conſideration. — If a merchant finds himſelf poſſeſſed of a ſurplus of 20,000 *l.* which he abſolutely cannot employ in trade, and from want of judgement, or other reaſons, does not chooſe to purchaſe land, or to lend this large ſum on private ſecurity — what is he to do with it. — In the language of my laſt quoted author, " it regorges in his hands, and " is a capital of uſe only by the intereſt it will

"bear." If he ſees it in the ſame light, he will veſt it in the funds — throw it into the grand whirlpool — the national debt. — Now it happens, that a German reſiding at Vienna has a property in this debt, an *undemandable capital* of 20,000 *l.* which he orders his agent to ſell, and the merchant purchaſes it — this operation thus performed, I am really ſo ſilly as to think, that it is the ſame thing to this German, by whom his capital is refunded by the government, or by the merchant; and I ſee it in the ſame point of view with reſpect to the like tranſactions between the ſubjects of this kingdom — further, the merchant is a voluntary purchaſer, and he purchaſes at a price often bearing a near, if not an exact proportion to the real value of money — and this very propoſition leads to another already mentioned — that ſuppoſing the national debt actually paid off, money would regorge in the hands of an infinite number of people, as in the caſe of the merchant before us, and government muſt either take it again, or run the riſk of loſing the money, and the ſubjects, or at leaſt the former, which would make to itſelf wings,

and

and fly to foreign ſhores, to propagate its ſpecie, by means of good *intereſt*.

I THEREFORE own my weakneſs, I cannot poſſibly get over the idea — though I have kept it to myſelf hitherto, and have often attempted to ſtifle it — that this operation anſwers all the purpoſes of a payment of the national debt, that foreigners or your own ſubjects can or ought to expect of you; and that conſidering the ſituation of your finances for forty years back, and the probable ſituation of them for forty years to come, owing to your extenſive commercial connections, and the neceſſary credit and influence you muſt ſupport with the powers of Europe; all other payment of the national debt is a miſapplication of the public revenue;—all we have to do is, to keep up the market in the ſame free and open manner as ever, and as near to the real value of money as poſſible; and punctually to pay when due, *the demandable perpetual annuity*.

BUT, my fellow citizens and countrymen! where are they? — Fled from the man who,

by

by leaving the national debt in its preſent ſituation, means to perpetuate their heavy! burthenſome taxes! — Return, my friends, and I will eaſe you of your fears on this head. — Let us review the finance operations in the hands of the great men who have filled that department ſince the peace — you will afterwards permit me to take the management of the public revenue, devoid of the treaſurer's ſtaff and ſalary; and when you have thoroughly examined the meaſures purſued by them, and thoſe propoſed by me, I hope it will appear that my ſyſtem will relieve you much ſooner than theirs, from your moſt oppreſſive taxes — in which caſe, I intreat your recommendation of me, as an humble coadjutor to the noble duke, who at preſent ſo worthily preſides at the treaſury board.

You are told by the author of *The preſent ſtate of the nation*, "that in the ſix years of "peace, reckoning to the end of the preſent "year 1768, about ſeven millions of the na- "tional debt has been paid off; and the de- "mand for intereſt leſſened about 360,000 *l.*

"— alſo

" — alſo, that for this purpoſe, and to make " good deficiencies in the ſupplies for the cur- " rent ſervice of theſe ſix years, 12,891,249 *l.* " the produce of the ſinking fund for that pe- " riod, and the further ſum of 3,030,255 *l.* ari- " ſing from ſeveral miſcellaneous articles brought " to the credit of the public account — has " been applied."—But in all this operation, what benefit has the nation or any individual ſubject received? —except the landholders, who kindly eaſed themſelves of one ſhilling in the pound on the land-tax, in oppoſition to adminiſtration. — The taxes which you ſay bear hard on our trade and manufactures have not been diminiſhed one jot by this meaſure. —— Now let us recollect the maxim unanimouſly ſupported by all political writers, — " that " every prudent nation ſhould provide a fund " in time of peace for the neceſſities of war;" and aſk, what proviſion has been made by this reduction of the national debt, for a fund to carry on any future war? the anſwer is, None at all. — Yet ſince we have been obliged to deviate from the plan propoſed at the firſt inſtitution of the ſinking fund; and inſtead of applying

plying its produce "ſacredly and inviolably to "the payment of the national debt," have applied only the ſmaller part to that ſervice, why not break through the deſign of its inſtitution totally! — in order to provide a fund for the exigences of the ſtate in a future war, without the melancholy proſpect of laying further burthens on the people, an object which claims the preference to all others. — Can you imagine, that the payment of ſeven millions of the *undemandable capital* of the national debt, has raiſed the reputation of our pub-credit in the eyes of foreigners or of our fellow citizens — not at all — ſo long as the market is open, which it will ever be while the annual, perpetual intereſt, or anuuity is punctually paid; it will be a matter of indifference to the poſſeſſors whether their capitals are refunded only, as they want them, by new purchaſers, in the open market, or by the government paying off the national debt. — But if, after they have made a temporary uſe of their capitals, ſuch as urgent occaſions may require, they ſhould find theſe capitals lying on their hands unemployed, I believe in that caſe

they

they would heartily wiſh the government to continue the national debt, that they might have an opportunity to replace theſe capitals at intereſt, on the faith of our public credit, by means of the open market — at leaſt ſo it appears to me, on this principle, that capitals, which trade cannot abſorb, become uſeleſs, unleſs they are placed out at intereſt; and we have already ſeen, that the wiſdom of government conſiſts in preventing capitals, when money regorges in a nation, being ſent abroad; and the ſubjects tranſporting themſelves with their property to foreign climes.

In *The preſent ſtate of the nation* we find this melancholy reflection — "While ſo large a "ſhare of the ſurplus of the ſinking fund is "thus taken away yearly from its original de-"ſtination, and applied to the current ſervice "in time of peace, what hopes can we have "of ſeeing ſuch a reduction made in the ca-"pital of the public debt, as ſhall enable the "parliament to redeem ſome of our burthen-"ſome taxes, and give relief to our manufac-"turers, artificers and mariners," — certainly

none! — „ what new tax could be deviſed, " which, if it proves a productive one, would " not by adding to the burthens with which our " trade and manufactures are already oppreſſed, " ſink them under its weight?"—Not one, that I know of, if you mean a general tax. — Since this is the caſe, there appears but one alternative — either we muſt remain unprovided for a future war, or we muſt adopt ſome new ſyſtem in the management of our finances, and in the application of the public money — my plan comes next in view; and if it ſhall be deemed rational and practicable, I ſhall only lament that it did not occur to me ſome years ſince, previous to the diſpoſal of the ſeven millions juſt mentioned. — I humbly ſubmit it to your conſideration, whether the annual produce of the ſinking fund, after providing for the deficiencies of the current ſervice, ſhould not from the commencement of the year 1769, or from the time of cloſing the account of its produce for 1768, be converted to a new purpoſe, and be new chriſtened, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, by the name, ſtyle and title — of, *The new fund for the payment*

ment of the perpetual annual intereſt of any loans that ſhall be hereafter made by the nation in time of war — this fund to be veſted in the hands of a committee of both houſes of parliament, and of the king: as joint truſtees for the nation, for being ſuppoſed to be iſſued out of the treaſury annually, it could no longer be kept in that department without creating a jealouſy of miniſterial power; and all poſſible improvements of the public revenue that could be deviſed, and that ſhould be found productive in time of peace, I would propoſe to conſolidate or incorporate into this fund: if the preſent peace continues a few years, I apprehend by theſe means, we ſhould be enabled to make this fund adequate to the payment of the annual intereſt of any ſums we may have occaſion to borrow in a future war — "which the late "peace has enabled us to carry on as effectual-"ly, and with much leſs expence than the laſt." The produce of this fund with the additions that ſhall be ſuggeſted, could not amount to leſs than two millions, bearing an intereſt of 3 *per cent*, which intereſt amounting to 160,000*l.* "taxes to that amount, might be redeemed

" and taken off the people of Great Britain, " in every year while peace continued; and " what nation in Europe would think of com- " mencing war with her, when they ſaw her " maintaining ſo formidable a peace eſtabliſh- " ment," as the preſent, " and with a clear " ſurplus revenue of two millions with which, " to augment her forces" and to make new loans adequate to the exigencies of war.

THE author of *The preſent ſtate of the nation*, propoſes to make the ſinking fund produce " a clear ſurplus revenue of two millions," by the following additions to the uſual annual grants for the peace eſtabliſhment,

Annual revenue from America	200,000
Ditto from Ireland — —	100,000
Ditto from Aſia, *viz.* from the Eaſt India company — — —	400,000
total £	700,000

and by reducing the peace eſtabliſhment. — As to the ſum to be drawn from Aſia, I think it might very politically, and without detriment to

to the company's affairs, be raiſed to 700,000*l.* or even to one million annually, if they continue in the flouriſhing ſtate they are now in—but with reſpect to America and Ireland, the project of drawing ſuch revenues from them, will be found ſo impracticable, and the plan itſelf is ſo full of improbabilities, that I think after theſe, little excuſe is wanting for any propoſals I may ſubmit, with great humility, to the public.

We will now place to the account of our new fund, one million to be yearly drawn from Aſia, and whoever conſiders the immenſe fortunes made by individuals in the India ſervice, the profits of the company's trade, the flouriſhing ſituation of their affairs, or the real value of their territorial juriſdictions which abſolutely belong to the crown, cannot doubt their ability to furniſh this quota, in conſideration of an indulgence rather unconſtitutional, on the part of government, in permitting ſuch a monopoly of ſo profitable a trade, in a free commercial nation. —

Some other improvements ſhall now be pointed out.—"In 1764, the lawsof trade were carried

" carried into ſtrict execution, and clandeſtine " importations univerſally checked, " ſo ſay the " authors of the preſent ſtate of the nation," to this truth I moſt heartily ſubſcribe, and having ſeen the good effects of this meaſure near home, I as cordially recommend, with all due deference, the revival and extenſion of it — nor can I proceed on this head without reminding you, my fellow citizens and countrymen! once more, — " that the virtue of the people conſti- " tutes the proſperity of a free ſtate," and aſſuring you at the ſame time, that I could give ſuch inſtances of many of you defrauding the public revenue by ſmugling, nay and of thoſe who eat the king's and the people's bread, as would aſtoniſh you: all laws have hitherto proved ineffectual to ſuppreſs this evil, which deprives the ſtate of above half a million yearly; and that through the connivance of the very officers appointed to prevent it — but can it be expected that the ſubaltern officers of the cuſtoms and exciſe will be incorruptible, while their ſalaries are inſufficient for the maintenance of their families, can it be ſuppoſed, that the man who has every neceſſary to provide for them

them in this dear ſeaſon from thirty pounds per annum; and I think the tide waiters have no more; but ſuppoſe it fifty; will always withſtand the temptation of conniving at paſſengers, and at the maſters of veſſels carrying things on ſhore in their pockets — I will atteſt on oath if called upon, the truth of the following contracts which I have heard made with the maſters of veſſels in the ports of France and Flanders, — " What muſt we give you captain for " this packet of Bruſſels lace, it is ſmall and " will go in your pocket, the value about 200*l.* " ſterling? —Two guineas—Will not one and " an half ſatisfy you? No Sir, I muſt give half " a guinea to the officer to let me carry it on " ſhore in my pocket—For theſe four dozen of " Burgundy? —Two ſhillings per bottle; and " you muſt allow me to give one dozen to the " officer if I cannot manage it otherwiſe. —

I HAVE but one remedy to propoſe to government on this head—increaſe the ſalaries of the officers, ſo as they may be enabled to provide comfortably for their families; and then make it felony for them to connive at the running

ning goods on ſhore; they will not then truſt their lives in the hands of the maſters of veſſels, nor of paſſengers — and take ſome immediate ſtep to prevent the daily practice below bridge, of ſending little boxes, barrels, and hampers on board of outward-bound ſhips from the houſes of the captains, which the officers receive on board, as captains proviſions and ſtores, without any permit from the cuſtom-houſe; and by this means, the tools and implements of manufacturers are ſent abroad, contrary to act of parliament.

The contraband trade from France, forms a conſiderable ballance againſt us, which I have here noticed, according to promiſe — and I muſt now mention one vulgar error, which I apprehend ſtill prevails — it is a notion received among the common people, that ſmugling is only, as they term it, cheating the king, they ſuppoſe therefore, that they only diminiſh the income of the crown by this illicit practice; and this they make light of — but ſurely, the whole body of the people ſhould have been informed from the treaſury — that our preſent

moſt

moſt gracious Sovereign on his acceſſion, was pleaſed to accept of 800,000 *l.* per annum, in lieu of the tonnage and poundage, exciſe duties, &c. which before conſtituted the civil liſt, or revenue of the crown: theſe articles being by this arrangement, thrown into the aggregate fund, appropriated to the public ſervice, ſmuggling now, is defrauding the nation,—in the late reign, indeed, it was only cheating the king, as the vulgar term it — the man who practiſed it then was a baſe, diſloyal ſubject, he who continues it now, is a common thief, a plunderer of the public. —

But we have another ballance of trade againſt us from France — the importation of a ſet of worthleſs raſcals before mentioned, who land here pennyleſs, and finally return to the continent with more or leſs of our ſpecie — charters have been long ſince granted to corporations, by which, maſters in trades, arts and manufactures, are empowered to make young perſons free of the corporations of which they are members — to attain this privilege, and alſo to learn the art and myſtery exerciſed by theſe

maſters—youths undergo a painful ſervitude of ſeven years; and their parents pay an exorbitant apprenticeſhip fee—their ſervitude expired —idle faſhion prefers the ſkill of the foreign artiſt, and the native ſuffers; but it is ſaid, let the corporations, let the injured proſecute — muſt they then turn informers to obtain juſtice; and after all, have the mortification to find thoſe gentry provided with a retaining certificate, denoting them to be the ſervants of ſome ambaſſador, or of ſome Britiſh nobleman?—I humbly propoſe therefore, the laying a duty on the importation of this dry commodity—if it does not anſwer greatly, as to the purpoſe of improving the public revenue, it will at leaſt operate a good effect as a ſumptuary law, and let it extend to all foreign ſervants, artiſts and tradeſmen; it will be idle to urge, that this will be retaliated in foreign countries, for I know of none, where an Engliſhman can make a fortune, he may ſpend one indeed, wherever he pleaſes. —

It pleaſes me much to find the following remark in *The preſent ſtate of the nation*, "it is "the

" the duty of every government to confine the " expences of its people within its own domi- " nions" — let a duty then, be laid on the exportation of ſuch commodities as idle, capricious, opulent ſubjects, who will not confine their expences to their own country, but ſpend their revenues in foreign nations, enriching the foreign tradeſman, artiſt, merchant, banker, &c. while they diminiſh the conſumption of manufactures and proviſions at home, this alſo will operate as a ſumptuary law, if it will not improve the revenue; though I am apt to think, our idle gentry will rather pay 10 *per cent.* to be exported, than be obliged to paſs the reſidue of their declining lives, in filthy, foggy England — young gentlemen who travel for improvement muſt be excepted. —

A DUTY on the exportation of horſes is likewiſe humbly recommended on the ſame principles, as a ſumptuary law; and as a revenue act — whoever conſiders the price given on the continent for Engliſh ſaddle horſes, *viz.* from fifty to three hundred guineas; the immenſe profit of horſe jockeys and their employers, and

the diſadvantages formerly ſtated with reſpect to the growth of wheat, will not ſcruple I think, to fix this duty at 5 *l.* *per* horſe, which will certainly bring in more than the duty on "gum ſenega."

When I propoſed to improve the public revenue without laying additional taxes on the people, I muſt be underſtood to have meant general taxes, ſuch as affect the huſbandman, the manufacturer, the artiſt, the tradeſman, and the labourer, the duties hitherto propoſed ſteer clear of them — ſo alſo will the doubling the wheel tax; and I believe no man can doubt the neceſſity of a ſumptuary law with reſpect to *carriages*, as they are now politely termed — thoſe who can afford to keep them, can certainly bear the augmentation of the tax; thoſe who cannot, will, it is to be hoped, be thereby induced, to lay them down. —

Lastly, having duly obſerved the luxury of the times — that all ranks of people are living greatly beyond their incomes; and that poſterity ſtands a foul chance of being impoveriſhed by

by this prevailing error — and alſo, that all plans of inſurance or aſſurance of ſhips, houſes, lives, &c. are equally advantageous to the undertakers; and to the public; I ſee no reaſon why we ſhould not provide for infants, as well as for our wives by this means — to inſure poſterity from poverty, will be as beneficial to the ſtate, as the inſuring private property from the perils of fire and water, or the providing incomes for widows can be, to individuals; and ſince the proprietors of the ſeveral plans of inſurance in this metropolis, have raiſed conſiderable capitals by their profits, I hope my plan will not prove leſs advantageous to government, being calculated at the rate of 25 *l. per cent.* in their favour, and of near 40 *per cent.* in favour of the ſubſcribers. —

The whole plan reſts upon a ſuppoſition, that every parent, in decent circumſtances, would willingly retrench ſome of his ſuperfluous expences, in order to provide portions on eaſy terms for his children; the calculations on this ſubject are long and intricate; and are formed on the bills of mortality of Vienna, Paris, and London;

London; as I have a fortune to ſeek, theſe I muſt withhold, till I am aſſured of the approbation of the public—indeed the printing of them without it, would have involved me in too heavy an expence — but I find on the whole, that the government may contract to give 100 *l.* ſterling, to every child at the age of 21; which ſhall be regiſtered by the parent as ſoon as poſſible after the birth, the parent agreeing to pay an annuity to the government of 3 *l. per annum* till the age of 21 — if the child dies in its minority, the annuity to ceaſe, as well as all claim on the government — the annuity to be increaſed in proportion for children already born, according to their different ages — all perſons to be allowed to take what number of policies they pleaſe on the life of each child — I imagine people of rank, if they approved the ſcheme, might be induced to ſubſcribe for 50 policies on the life of a daughter, or on the lives of each younger child, where the family was not large; as it would be a much eaſier method of providing a portion of 5000 *l.* for each, than by mortgaging eſtates, — a common tradeſman I ſuppoſe would inſure four children,

and

and take two policies on each child, it will be much eaſier conceived, that he can ſpare 24 *l.* *per annum*, out of the yearly profits of his trade, than that he can take 800 *l.* out of his capital ſtock, to give them 200 *l.* each, if they all live to attain the age of 21. On a moderate computation I cannot ſuppoſe a leſs ſum than ſix millions to be ſubſcribed at the firſt ſetting out; —and it is to be obſerved, that as children will continue to be born, and to be inſured ad infinitum, the fund will be perpetually increaſing in the hands of government, and no demand can be made, till the expiration of 21 years — in the mean time, a part of this ſum may be applied to the public ſervice on great emergencies, ſince the ſubſcription for any given five years preceding, any given demand to be made by the ſurvivors of any claſs of ſubſcribers attaining the age of 22 — will be ſufficient to pay the claims — it is evident that the faith of the nation muſt be engaged to make the ſecurity good, — for this ſeveral ways may be deviſed hereafter, if the plan, in this its rude ſtate, ſhould merit notice, if it ſhould not, I humbly intreat, that this looſe out-line of a voluntrary

tary perpetual aid to government, may not be the means of calling in queſtion, or of condemning too haſtily, the reſt of this little work, "to err is human, to forgive divine." Independant of this plan, we have ſeen the neceſſity of retrenching our expences, that we may be enabled the better to ſupport our preſent taxes, and to leſſen their influence on the price of our manufactures, and on the neceſſaries of life. — I ſhall therefore cloſe the whole with ſtating the annual expences of a working manufacturer and his family in 1734, and the preſent expences of ſuch a family, including the indulgences they are pleaſed to allow themſelves in theſe hard times! — and if after all, my honeſt endeavours to ſupport public credit, and to revive the drooping ſpirits of my countrymen ſhould prove ineffectual; owing to an ungenerous want of confidence in their rulers, and of real patriotic attachment to their country — ſo that the long foreboded general bankruptcy muſt take place, I hope it will not be deemed preſumption, if I promiſe, ſhould this dreaded event happen in my day, to reſume the pen, and point out a method of conducting the finances,

finances, even in that ſtate of anarchy and confuſion, ſo as to retrieve in a ſhort time the credit of the nation.

By an eſtimate taken in the year 1734, of the annual neceſſary expences of a working manufacturer in London, for himſelf, a wife and four children, it appears they amounted to 54 *l.* 10 *s.* 4 *d.* and by an eſtimate made in the preſent year 1768, it appears that the very ſame neceſſary expences for ſuch a family amounts to 72 *l.* 13 *s.* 5 *d.* ¼, owing to the difference in the price of proviſions and the other neceſſaries of life, which we compute, taking one article with another, have riſen one third ſince 1734; ſome indeed have doubled the price given then, particularly butcher's meat, but other articles, ſuch as common cloathing, &c. are not increaſed above one fourth; the details of theſe eſtimates would be tedious and diſagreeable to the reader, but he may depend on the exactneſs of the computation in groſs — of this difference in the annual expence of the whole family, amounting to 18 *l.* 3 *s.* 5 *d.* ¼, or one third of the amount in 1734, not 3 *l.*

can be fairly placed to the account of any taxes laid on the public ſince that period, all the remainder of this increaſe is owing in London, to the confluence of people, to the arts of monopolizing, to the rack-rents of land, which obliges the grazier to pay ſo much dearer for fodder and paſturage; and raiſes the price of meat. — And I am ſorry to add, to the unneceſſary idle expences of this claſs of people amounting to 4 *l.* yearly, which exceeds the burthen of additional taxes, ſo loudly and lately ſo indecently complained of — they conſiſt in ſome families, of contributions to methodiſt teachers for their own ſupport, and quarterly or monthly payments for ſeats in their tabernacles, beſides hymn books, Sabbath-day, and ſacramental preparations, &c. — in other families they take in weekly and monthly, ſome paltry publications that diſgrace the republic of letters, by a low retail ſale of literary abilities; ſometimes 'tis an Hiſtory of England, then a Chriſtian Magazine, then a Tyburn Chronicle, and thus 6 *d. per* week and *per* month, ſlide imperceptibly out of the pockets of the induſtrious manufacturer or artiſt, and

where

where both the methodiſt contributions, and the taſte for reading, unite, it forms an additional expence of 5 *l. per annum.* Lop off theſe excreſcences, candidly compare the advanced price of wages, with the difference in the price of proviſions occaſioned by any taxes ſince 1734, and you will find on the whole, that the inferior claſſes of the people in London never had leſs reaſon to complain; it is the ſame thing with reſpect to the reputable tradeſman, his annual expences for a family equal to that of the working manufacturer, with the addition of a maid, amounted in the year 1734, to 315 *l.* but it is hard to ſay what they amount to now, including the indulgences he chooſes to allow himſelf and family, but I believe 500 *l.* will hardly ſuffice—he muſt therefore make 50 *per cent. per annum* of a capital of 1000 *l.* inſtead of 30, his profits of courſe muſt be larger, or he muſt fail; this makes the conſumer pay dearer, and the ſhopkeeper who retails to him, fixes the blame on the taxes which have advanced the price of the commodity.—" In a word, " our only hopes of continuing the proſperous " ſtate this nation has enjoyed for ſome years

" paſt,

" paſt, depend on a general revival of our an-
" cient frugality, and an abatement of all im-
" moderate expences both public and private; a
" point of ſuch importance to theſe kingdoms,
" that our very conſtitution itſelf reſts upon
" it; and ſince his Majeſty by his prudent ma-
" nagement of his private affairs, ſets an ex-
" ample of œconomy to the whole kingdom,
" it is not to be doubted that thoſe will moſt merit
" his eſteem, who are frugal in the adminiſtra-
" tion of the public revenues of the nation."

FINIS.